

Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Press Page: www.crowdedfire.org/press/

**Crowded Fire Theater presents the Bay Area Premiere of
Christina Anderson's
INKED BABY**

September 12-October 5, 2019

at the POTRERO STAGE

1695 18th St, San Francisco

(press opening Monday, September 16)

San Francisco - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) Christina Anderson returns to Crowded Fire with INKED BABY, the second production in Crowded Fire's 21st season of new and contemporary plays. Featuring an ensemble cast directed by Crowded Fire Resident Artist Lisa Marie Rollins, INKED BABY introduces a world that is at once both familiar and strange, and questions why we hold on to home even when that land is toxic.

Desperate to have a child and distrustful of artificial methods, Gloria and her husband Greer decide to conceive a child by natural means, with the help of Gloria's sister Lena. The sex is good, the insemination successful -- and yet affection is just out of reach for everyone involved. As Lena's pregnancy develops and relationships become ever-more strained, a strange contamination begins to affect the township's health, bringing the family's choices and their mortality into question.

Crowded Fire is thrilled to welcome back the nationally-lauded Anderson after producing her first Bay Area production, the world-premiere of one of her first plays, DRIP, in 2009, followed by GOOD GOODS in 2012. Poetic, mysterious, and full of longing, Christina Anderson's INKED BABY questions how and why we hold onto land and family, even when both seem toxic and the future tenuous.

Director Rollins will lead a cast that includes Christell Lewis, Jennifer McNeal, David Everett Moore, Leigh Rondon-Davis, Kenny Scott, ShawnJ West, and Jasmine Williams. Designers and the creative team include Alejandra Maria Rivas (assistant director), Amissa Miller (dramaturg), Celeste Martore (scenic design), Jackquelin Pedota (costume design), Dylan Feldman (lighting design), Christopher Saucedo (sound design), Marykerin Naughton (props design), and Rachel Grace Reyes Mogan (stage manager).

INKED BABY runs at the Potrero Stage, 1695 18th Street in San Francisco September 12 through October 5 (press opening Monday, September 16). Cast photos available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/>

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BIOS:

Christina Anderson (playwright) plays include *How to Catch Creation*, *pen/man/ship*, *The Ashes Under Gait City*, *Man in Love*, *Blacktop Sky*, *Hollow Roots*, and *Drip*. Her work has appeared at The Public Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Penumbra Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, and other theaters in the United States and Canada. Awards and honors: Inaugural Harper Lee Award for Playwriting, MacDowell Colony Fellowship, three Susan Smith Blackburn nominations, and Woursell Prize Finalist. Christina is a resident playwright at New Dramatists, Epic Theatre Ensemble, and a DNAWORKS Ensemble member.

Lisa Marie Rollins (director) is a freelance director, writer and new play developer. She is co-facilitator for CFT's Resilience and Development New Play Lab. She is a Sundance Institute Theatre Lab Fellow (Directing) and a Directors Lab West member. Regional directing and dramaturg work include Crowded Fire Theater, Playwright Foundation, TheatreFirst, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Shotgun Players, Custom Made Theatre, Magic Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse and new plays by Lauren Gunderson, Geetha Reddy, Idris Goodwin, Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm, and creative collaborations with comedic artists W. Kamau Bell and Zahra Noorbakash. She has been a writing fellow with Djerassi, SF Writers Grotto, CALLALOO London, VONA, Just Theater Play Lab and Joshua Tree Highlands Artist Residency. She is currently developing her new plays *Token* and *Love is Another Country*. *Love is Another Country* will have its World Premiere with Coin and Ghost Theater Company in Los Angeles Feb 2019. She holds graduate degrees from Claremont Graduate University and University of California, Berkeley and is Distinguished Guest Artist Faculty at St Mary's College in Performance Studies. Her new chapbook of poems, *Other Words for Grief* (2018, winner, Mary Tanenbaum Literary Award) is now available from Finishing Line Press. She is currently a Resident Artist with Crowded Fire Theater and Artist-in-Residence at BRAVA Theater for Women in San Francisco.

CAST:

Christell Lewis (Gloria) is delighted to be making her Crowded Fire Theater debut. She enjoys performing but also is dedicated to inspiring youth through the power of arts education. Favorite roles include Beneatha, *A Raisin in the Sun*; Karen Wright, *The Children's Hour*; Abigail Murambe, *In the Continuum*. She really enjoys creating original work and devised theatre. Christell holds a BA in broadcast journalism from Howard University and an MA in educational theatre from NYU Steinhardt. She is thrilled to be a part of the amazing cast of *Inked Baby*.

Jennifer McNeal (Medical Assistant) is an Oakland native and multi-hyphenate artist who is thrilled to be making her Crowded Fire debut. Jennifer has performed with Custom Made Theater Co, the Ubuntu Theatre Project, Theatre Rhinoceros, Those Women Productions, and recently completed a Bay Area touring show with NCTC's YouthAware program. Jennifer is a former student of Berkeley Rep's School of Theatre. She would like to thank her friends and family for their continued support.

David Everett Moore (Greer) is excited to return to Crowded Fire Theater, especially for the work of Christina Anderson, one of his favorite playwrights. David performed in Anderson's *Good Goods* for CFT in 2012, and he was most recently seen in CFT's *Transfers* earlier this season. He has worked with many Bay Area theaters, including San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Shakespeare Festival, African-American Shakespeare Company, AlterTheater, Arabian Shakespeare Festival, Word For Word, and Livermore Shakespeare Festival. Regional credits include work with Capital Stage Company and Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Favorite roles include Addison in *Safe House* for Aurora Theatre Company, BJJ in *An Octoroon* for Capital Stage Company, and Black Man in *We Are Proud To Present* for Just Theater. David is a Resident Artist of the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and a proud graduate of UC Berkeley, where he earned his BA in Theater and Performance Studies.

Leigh Rondon-Davis (Lena) is a performer, visual artist, dramaturg, and playwright from both New York City and the Bay Area. They attended Wellesley College and was a member of Oakland's Laney College Fusion Theatre Project. Leigh first began working with Crowded Fire as a dramaturg on the 2017 Matchbox Reading Series, and also appeared in 2018's *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again*. Their additional performance credits include: *Variety Pack 2018* (Cutting Ball Theater), *Where The Boys Are* (FaultLine Theater), *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* (Curran and Magic Theatre), *The Niceties* and *Caught* (Shotgun Players), *Hamlet*, and *Dance of the Holy Ghosts* (Ubuntu Theater Project). Leigh currently works for and is a Company Member at Ubuntu Theater Project in Oakland and Shotgun Players in Berkeley.

Kenny Scott (Odlum) is an actor from Washington, D.C. and Oakland, California. He attended Morgan State University, and was a member of the Laney College Fusion Theatre Project where he was featured in three productions (*Más*, *The Late Wedding*, and *In The Wound*). Kenny's recent credits include staged readings with Shotgun Players, Magic Theatre, Golden Thread, and Lorraine Hansberry. Full productions with Quantum Dragon Theatre (*Ageless*), The New Conservatory Theatre Center (*Mystery of Love and Sex*), Cutting Ball (*Variety Pack Festival*), The Forum (*Sarafael*) and Idiot String (*Port Stories*). He is also an Ubuntu Theatre Project company member (*Hamlet*, *Mother Courage*). Kenny is excited to be making his Crowded Fire debut and to work with this awesome team of artists!

ShawnJ West [one word pronounced Shawn Jay] (Dr. Marion) is thrilled to be making his Crowded Fire debut in *Inked Baby*. He's been seen throughout the Bay Area since his move from Seattle, WA eight years ago appearing as Lady Percy in The Free Theatre's *Henry IV, Part I*; George in Role Players Ensemble Theatre's *Of Mice and Men* in Danville; Buckingham in *Richard III* and Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida* with Impact Theatre. As a company member with the African-American Shakespeare Company, notable roles include Turnbo in August Wilson's *Jitney*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Gooper in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; and Sir Hugh Evans in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other fun roles include, Belize in *Angels in America*; Perestroika, Gidger in *The Violet Hour*; Raul in *Extremities*; and Robert in *The Exonerated*. He's also enjoyed roles on the musical side of theatre in the shows *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls*, *West Side Story*, *A Chorus Line* and with Berkeley Playhouse as Marty in their 2018 production of *Dreamgirls*.

Jasmine Williams (Ky) is so excited to be working with Crowded Fire for the first time, she has read Christina Anderson's words and immediately felt moved to tell this story. She is thankful and grateful for her gift and ability of storytelling! Her recent work includes: *The Last Sermon of Sister Imani* (Theater First), *Waafrika* (Theater First) ,and *They/Them* (Those Women Production company). Companies she has worked with include: Campo Santo, Theater First, Those Woman Production company, African American Shakespeare Company, and New Conservatory Theater Company. She thanks her family and friends for always encouraging her to follow her dreams.

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For Calendar Editors:

The Bay Area Premiere of INKED BABY by Christina Anderson

directed by Lisa Marie Rollins

September 12-October 5 (Press Opening September 16)

Potrero Stage, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

PERFORMANCES:

Thurs-Sat 8 PM with Special Opening Night Performance on Monday, September 17, 8PM and Sunday Matinees at 2pm on September 23 and 29.

(no performance Thursday, September 19; additional performance on Wednesday, October 2)

Tickets: Prices range from \$10-\$35 progressively during the course of the run.

We offer Pay-What-You-Can Preview performances and student/senior/group rates.

Tickets: Visit www.crowdedfire.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1

www.crowdedfire.org or (415) 523-0034 ext 0

Cast photos available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/>