

Crowded Fire Theater

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Crowded Fire Theater 2014 Matchbox Readings Series Features New Plays by Geetha Reddy, Andrew Saito, MJ Kaufman, and Eugenie Chan December 1-9

Thick House Theater
1695 18th Street, SF

Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) announces the four featured playwrights and plays for the 2014 *Matchbox Readings Series*, public staged readings of plays in development. New plays by playwrights Geetha Reddy, Andrew Saito, MJ Kaufman, and Eugenie Chan in readings from December 1-9, 2014 at the Thick House Theater. Crowded Fire champions playwrights whose work offers a vital contribution to the American theater landscape with a commitment to diversifying the canon of contemporary plays. "We believe art is always political," says Crowded Fire Artistic Director Marissa Wolf, "and that in order to move toward a more just society, theaters must offer a wider range of aesthetics and voices on our stages." *The Matchbox: Commissioning and Developing New Plays* grew out of CFT's need to bolster playwrights' revision processes in order to strengthen the scripts before rehearsals for the professional productions began.

The plays featured in CFT's 2014 *Matchbox Readings Series* are: (TBD) by Geetha Reddy (Dec. 1, 7pm); *La Lechera* by Andrew Saito (Dec. 2, 7pm); *Murmur Rock* by MJ Kaufman (Dec. 8, 7pm) and *19 Wentworth Alley* by Eugenie Chan (Dec. 9, 7pm).

Award-winning playwright Christopher Chen, whose upcoming *The Late Wedding* and 2012 hit *The Hundred Flowers Project* were both commissioned and developed through *The Matchbox* remarks, "By giving a still-emerging playwright a pathway to a full production, Crowded Fire facilitated a major turning point in my career. They steadfastly believed in my project and me as a writer through the entire process, making sure I had all the resources necessary to bring the play into fruition. To my mind, *The Matchbox Commission's* emphasis on specifically working towards a full production clearly sets it apart from similar, less ambitious programs in comparably-sized theater companies." *The Hundred Flowers Project* was a co-commission with Playwrights Foundation as is *A Wonderverse* by Geetha Reddy which will kick off this year's *Matchbox Reading Series*. *A Wonderverse* is slated for the Crowded Fire mainstage in 2015.

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At: Thick House, 1695 18th St., SF (between Carolina St. & Arkansas St. in Potrero Hill)

Readings: 7 PM

Tickets: Free to the public RSVP at

Box Office by phone (415) 746-9238 **Photos:** <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/>

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CFT MATCHBOX- add one

“We strive for a balance of styles, stories, and voices in our *Matchbox* series, this year the pieces are thrillingly original. They are quite different from one another, even down to the process/circumstances of their creation and their current stages of development. It's a wild batch...” Laura Bruckener, CFT's Director of New Works.

MATCHBOX READING SERIES 2014

December 1, 7pm

TBD By Geetha Reddy

Working alone at night, a scientist makes an incredible discovery that challenges her beliefs and raises profound questions of right, ownership, responsibility, and power. *A Wonderverse* is a Crowded Fire Matchbox and Playwrights Foundation commissioned piece.

December 2, 7pm

La Lechera By Andrew Saito

Directed by Marissa Wolf

This grotesque, aggressive satire by up-and-coming, stylistically daring writer Andrew Saito plunges us headlong into the horrifying greed, need, and exploitation that grease the crushing wheels of commerce.

December 8, 7pm

Murmur Rock By MJ Kaufman

Directed by M. Graham Smith

A haunting play with the exposed bones of a dark fairy tale, *Murmur Rock* follows a Jewish American man and his mixed-race family traveling in Germany to find his father's village. However, long-buried secrets, the shifting terrain of memory, and bargains unwittingly made lead them to places they never expected.

December 9, 7pm

19 Wentworth Alley By Eugenie Chan

Directed by Marilee Talkington

Drawing on the true history of her grandfather, a leader in a Chinese crime syndicate in early 1900s San Francisco, Eugenie Chan layers original material with fragments of actual family documents to explore the world he knew - and made - one of lost hopes and grim choices.

PLAYWRIGHTS:

Geetha Reddy (*TBD*) is a five-time recipient of PlayGround's Emerging Playwright Award. Her play *Safe House* premiered in 2010 at SF Playhouse. At Central Works she and Aaron Loeb collaborated to create *Blastosphere!* In 2008 *Safe House* was selected for the Bay Area Playwright's Festival, and Sacramento's Capital Stage's Playwright's Revolution Festival. Geetha's plays *Me Given You* and *Girl in a Box* were part of the Playwright's Foundation's 'In the Rough' reading series. She was awarded PlayGround's June Anne Baker Prize in 2005 and has since received three Playground Alumni commissions. Her plays have also appeared in the San Francisco Fringe Festival, the Santa Rosa Quickies festival, Just Theatre Lab, and the Best of PlayGround Festival. Her short film *Obit* is currently showing at film festivals nationwide including LA Shorts Fest, NYC Indie Fest, and BendFilm Festival. Geetha is a member of the Dramatists Guild and Resident Playwright at the Playwrights Foundation.

Andrew Saito (*La Lechera*) plays include *La Lechera*, *El Río*, finalist for the Princess Grace Award, *Krispy Kritters in the Scarlett Night*, featured at Cutting Ball Theater's 2011 Risk Is This...Festival, and *The Patron Saint of Monsters*, selected for a 2012 Core Apprentice developmental reading at the Playwrights Center of Minneapolis. Other presenters include the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Brava! for Women in the Arts, Kearny Street Workshop, Asian American Theatre Company, La Peña Cultural Center, and Mixed Phoenix Theatre Company in New York. He has been twice commissioned by Handful Players, and has taught playwriting in rural Mayan villages in Guatemala, and with WritersCorps, Performing Arts Workshop, legendary Peruvian theatre collective Yuyachkani, and Montalvo Arts Center as a Teaching Artist Fellow. A two-time alternate

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CFT MATCHBOX- add two

for a Fulbright Fellowship in Creative Writing, as well finalist for a Jerome Playwriting Fellowship, Andrew is a proud founding member of Cut the Rhino, a 5-member theatre collective formed by the 2011 graduating class of the Iowa Playwrights Workshop.

MJ Kaufman (*Murmur Rock*) is a playwright originally from Portland, Oregon. MJ attended Wesleyan University and recently received an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. He has received awards and commissions from the Program for Women in Theater, the Playwrights Foundation, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, Young Playwrights Inc., New Harmony Project, and the Huntington Theatre, where he is also a playwriting fellow. MJ was awarded the 2010 Jane Chambers Prize in Feminist Theatre for his play, *A LIVE DRESS*. His work has also been produced by Fresh Ink Theatre, the Yale School of Drama and performed in Russian in Moscow. MJ received the 2013 ASCAP Cole Porter Prize in Playwriting. MJ is currently a member of the [Clubbed Thumb](#) Emerging Writers Group, The Falcons and an affiliated artist of New Georges. He lives in Philadelphia and teaches at Philadelphia Young Playwrights.

Eugenie Chan (*19 Wentworth Alley*) is a 5th generation San Franciscan whose forefathers sold slippers in Chinatown, dry goods in the desert, and love in the bordellos. No wonder her plays tend to mix up language, reality, tradition, and history. Her work includes *Madame Ho*, *Kitchen Table*, *19 Wentworth*, *Bone to Pick*, *Diadem*, *Tontlawald*, *Daphne Does Dim Sum*, *Rancho Grande*, *Emil*, *A Chinese Play*, *Novell-aah!*, *Pilgrim*, *Consent*, *Circus*, and opera libretti *Courtside*, *Snakewoman*. Theaters that have produced or developed her plays include the Public, Playwrights Horizons, Ma-Yi, Centenary Stage, Pan Asian Rep, and Perishable Theatre; on the West Coast: Cutting Ball Theater, Thick Description, Magic Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Northwest Asian American Theatre, Group Theatre, East West Players, and the Asian American Theatre Company, and the Houston Grand Opera: HGOco. Eugenie has received commissions from HGOco, the Magic/Sloan Science Initiative, Cutting Ball, and the San Francisco Foundation; awards from Mixed Blood Theater, NYU; residencies from Sundance, Hedgebrook; grants from the Lippman Family New Frontier, San Francisco Arts Commission, the SF and Wallace Foundations, TBA New Works, CA\$H; and fellowships from the Berilla Kerr, Affymax, Tournesol, Film Arts, and George Lucas Educational Foundations. Her work is published in Alexander Street Press' Asian American Drama and North American Women Writers and Lexington Books' Embodiments of Asian/American and Pacific Islander/American Sexualities. She is a Resident Playwright at New Dramatists and playwright emerita at the Cutting Ball Theater. Eugenie has also written political satire for the San Francisco Mime Troupe and screenplays which have been finalists for Nicholl and Cinestory Fellowships. She holds a BA in Literature from Yale and an MFA from NYU.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

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