



Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Press Page: www.crowdedfire.org/press/

**Crowded Fire Theater presents the World Premiere of
Star Finch's
SHIPPING & HANDLING**

**August 10 - September 7, 2024
at the Magic Theatre**

Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Blvd, Landmark Building D, San Francisco
(press opening Monday, August 12)

San Francisco, CA; UPDATED August 12, 2024 - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) Announcing Crowded Fire's World Premiere of SHIPPING & HANDLING by Star Finch, directed by Lisa Marie Rollins and Leigh Rondon-Davis.

As an evening of theater told in reverse, SHIPPING & HANDLING invites us to expand our visions of a future AI world through the power of Black artistry. Audiences will be propelled back through time, witnessing a post-show afterparty of actors, a playwright's experimental talkback, and then the performance itself: a surreal and beautiful Black Feminine vision of a soon-to-be robotic reality. A revolutionary world premiere and 2024 Rella Lossy Award winner from Star Finch, Crowded Fire & Campo Santo's Mellon Foundation Playwright-in-Residence, *Shipping & Handling* offers a sacred space to reflect on our humanity, and to collectively reimagine the future.

From playwright Star Finch, "Shipping & Handling seeks to transmit a signal for locating the tone of what it means to be human in this specific moment of AI, and provide inspiration to collectively reimagine our future design. We need more people questioning the narrative of inevitability that we're constantly bombarded with. There is nothing advanced about AI technology that destroys the environment; there is nothing futuristic about technology labeled autonomous yet relies on unseen slave labor to function. How do we move our trajectory beyond simply rehashing colonial hierarchies under the banner of innovation? I want this play to give people of all ages confirmation that whatever dreams they may be having about the future: this is it, this is the moment to put those visions out into the world."

Associate Director and CFT Leader of Artistic Curation & Marketing Leigh Rondon-Davis writes, "Crowded Fire is thrilled to share SHIPPING AND HANDLING with our Bay Area community finally. From Star's visioning of this piece as part of our inaugural 2017-2019 Resilience & Development Lab cohort, to our 2019 Matchbox Reading Series presentation and postponed 2022 production, this play has been on a long journey, becoming more vibrant and expansive with each year. We are so grateful for all of the collaborators who have enriched this play with their brilliance and cannot wait to invite audiences to engage with the work."

Directors Lisa Marie Rollins and Leigh Rondon-Davis will lead this production featuring an ensemble that includes Tierra Allen, Rolanda D. Bell, Hodari Blue, Cat Brooks, Jamella Cross, Andre K. Jefferson, and Jasmine Milan Williams, with understudies Rezan Asfaw, Sundiata Ayinde, Jessica Dim, and Jerome White. Designers and the creative team include Tanya Orellana (scenic design), Ashley Méndez (props design and scenic design associate), Brooke Jennings (costume and mask design), Monyé Durham (hair and wig design), Ray Oppenheimer (lighting design), Wolfgang Lancelot Wachalovsky (projections design), Miles Lassi (sound design), Alex Fakayode (sound design associate), OYSTERKNIFE's Chibueze Crouch and Gabriele Christian (choreography), Rachel Mogan (stage manager), and Latiece Brown (assistant stage manager).

Recognizing COVID is still present and affecting our communities, CFT is committed to the safety of our artists and audiences. We will continue to require masking in the theater at all performances, and a video-on-demand option will be available for those who cannot join us at the theater in person. In addition, affordability and accessibility remain a priority and all tickets for this production will be sliding scale, with no one turned away for lack of funds.

SHIPPING & HANDLING runs at Magic Theatre, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D in San Francisco August 10 through September 7 (press opening Monday, August 12). Photos will be available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/> and <http://www.crowdedfire.org/shipping>

BIOS:

Star Finch (playwright, she/her) is a homegrown San Franciscan trying her best to hold ground amidst the erasure of gentrification. She is currently the Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Campo Santo and Crowded Fire Theater. She's an alumni of the Resident Playwrights Program (2018-2022) at Playwrights Foundation, where she also received an inaugural Playwrights Foundation Launch Award recognizing her career's dynamic liftoff in the Bay Area in 2023.

Finch's plays include H.O.M.E. [Hookers on Mars Eventually], BONDAGE (Relentless Award honorable mention), and JOSEPHINE'S FEAST. Her multidisciplinary collaborations include Campo Santo's ETHOS DE MASQUERADE (with Global Street Dance Masquerade) and Crowded Fire's DEATH BECOME LIFE (with Ensemble Mik Nawooj and AXIS Dance Company). In 2023 her play BONDAGE had its regional premiere at the Undermain Theatre in Dallas, TX.

Leigh Rondon-Davis (Director & Dramaturg, they/them) is a performer, dramaturg, director, and producer; in addition to their creative work, Leigh is on staff as part of Crowded Fire Theater's shared leadership team as the Leader of Artistic Curation & Marketing, where they are also a Resident Artist. Additionally, they are an Artistic Company Member at Shotgun Players and Casting Director with the Casting Collective. Leigh has had the immense pleasure of working at dozens of local companies, including A.C.T., Aurora Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Curran, Magic Theatre, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Oakland Theater Project, Playwrights Foundation, TheatreFIRST, West Edge Opera, and 3GT. While Leigh wears many hats as a theater-maker, much of their work and personal passion has been to shift the industry and its culture to be more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and sustainable as an anti-racist educator

and facilitator. Leigh's practice draws inspiration from liberation and abolition movements, transformative justice, adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy*, trauma-informed care, and their experience as a sexual health educator and rape crisis counselor to create safe and supportive creative spaces.

Lisa Marie Rollins (director, she/her) is a writer, director and new work developer. She is a Member of Stage Directors & Choreographers and Dramatist Guild. Selected directing & dramaturg credits include Sundance Institute Theatre Lab, New York Stage and Film, Berkeley Repertory Theater's Ground Floor, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Arizona Theater Company, Hedgebrook Women's Play Festival, Crowded Fire Theater, American Conservatory Theatre SF, Magic Theatre, new work by Star Finch, Lauren Gunderson, Geetha Reddy, Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm (CLIPPED- FX), and creative collaboration with comedic artist W. Kamau Bell (CNN). She has been a writing resident with Hedgebrook, Djerassi, CALLALOO London, VONA and more. She received a Wallace Gerbode Playwright Award for a commission with Crowded Fire Theater for her new play KARA. She was honored with a "Bay Brilliant" artist award from San Francisco's KQED, was a Bay Area Rainin Arts Fellowship nominee and is the recipient of multiple grants for her playwriting and theater making work. She is an Assistant Professor of Playwriting in the Department of Performance, Play and Design at University of California at Santa Cruz, where she leads THE IRIS LAB, a new creative incubator and residency space for global majority & equity minded theater makers.

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For Calendar Editors:

The World Premiere of SHIPPING & HANDLING by Star Finch

directed by Lisa Marie Rollins

August 10 - September 7 (Press Opening August 12)

Magic Theatre, 2 Marina Blvd. Building D, San Francisco

PERFORMANCES:

Press Night Performance on Monday, August 12, 8 PM

Fridays & Saturdays at 8 PM

Thursdays at 8 PM on August 8 and September 5.

Saturday Matinees at 3 PM on August 24, 31, and September 7.

Sunday Matinees at 3 PM on August 18, 25, and September 1 (no performance Sunday, August 11).

Tickets: Previews Pay-What-You-Can (PWYC), Tickets \$20+, no one turned away for lack of funds (NOTAFLOF).

Tickets: Visit <http://www.crowdedfire.org/shipping> for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1, email: BoxOffice [at] crowdedfire.org

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

Cast photos will be available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/> and <http://www.crowdedfire.org/shipping>