



PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER  
IMAGINING THEATER FORWARD SINCE 1971

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## See Martyna Majok's new play "queens" January 9 and 10 at the Playwrights' Center

(Minneapolis, MN—December 20, 2016)—Playwright Martyna Majok's work is making a great impact, most recently "Ironbound" at Round House Theatre (where it won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Original Play) and Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, and "Cost of Living" at Williamstown Theatre Festival and set for its New York debut at Manhattan Theatre Club this season. Her new play "queens" will receive a development workshop and two public readings at the Playwrights' Center on **Monday, January 9 and Tuesday, January 10 at 7 p.m.** as part of the Ruth Easton New Play Series. This series features free public readings of new plays in progress by Playwrights' Center Core Writers. Readings take place at the Playwrights' Center, 2301 E. Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. Reservations are recommended and can be made at [pwcenter.org](http://pwcenter.org).

In "queens," the lives of two generations of immigrant women in Queens collide in a series of small apartments. In reference to the title, Majok says, "'Queens' is a location and a status. I'm writing about female immigrants who are masters of their own small domains. They have dignity. Their resilience, what they've survived and transcended in their lives, commands respect. But that's not always how they're treated in this country. My mother and the women I've known growing up, a lot of them single mothers, were people that came over and just by virtue of this country had to be incredibly tough and stand up for what they needed to survive. That's the essence of a queen to me. Standing firmly on your own two feet, ready to go into battle."

"Never has this country needed the urgency of Martyna's voice more than this moment," says Playwrights' Center Producing Artistic Director Jeremy B. Cohen. "I can't wait to share her artistry and wit with our community, as well as amplify the varied and essential stories of female immigrants in the U.S., which Martyna sculpts so beautifully."

**Martyna Majok** was born in Bytom, Poland, and aged in Jersey and Chicago. She has worked with Actors Theatre of Louisville, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre/Women's Project Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Ensemble Studio Theatre, among others. Awards include David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize, New York Theatre Workshop's 2050 Fellowship, the Kennedy Center's Jean Kennedy Smith Award, and NNPN/Smith Prize for Political Playwriting. Commissions from Marin Theatre Company, South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club and The Geffen Playhouse. B.A.: University of Chicago; M.F.A.: Yale School of Drama, Juilliard. Martyna was the 2015-2016 PoNY Fellow at the Lark Play Development Center.  
[www.martynamajok.com](http://www.martynamajok.com)

**The Ruth Easton New Play Series** at the Playwrights' Center, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, provides selected Core Writers with 20 hours of workshop time to develop a new play in collaboration with top-notch

actors and other theater artists. Plays receive two public readings, giving audience members a unique and immediate way to experience new work and a chance to be part of the creative process. Plays recently seen in the Ruth Easton New Play Series that have full productions this theater season include George Brant's "Marie and Rosetta" Off-Broadway at Atlantic Theater and Carlyle Brown's "Finding Fish" at the Illusion Theater in Minneapolis.

The 2016-17 Ruth Easton New Play Series kicked off in December with "Wink" by Jen Silverman. After "queens" in January, the series will feature "Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart on February 6 and 7, "The Sea & The Stars" by local playwright Harrison David Rivers on March 6 and 7, and "Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing on April 3 and 4. Details at [pwcenter.org/ruth-easton-series](http://pwcenter.org/ruth-easton-series).

All events in the Ruth Easton New Play Series are free and open to the public. Reservations are recommended; reserve your spots at [pwcenter.org](http://pwcenter.org) or by contacting the Playwrights' Center at (612) 332-7481 or [info@pwcenter.org](mailto:info@pwcenter.org).

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*Photos of the playwright and previous Ruth Easton New Play Series readings are available at [pwcenter.org/media-room](http://pwcenter.org/media-room) or by contacting Jessica Franken at [jessicaf@pwcenter.org](mailto:jessicaf@pwcenter.org)*

*Majok is pronounced "MY-oak."*

## THE 2016-17 RUTH EASTON NEW PLAY SERIES

December 5 & 6 at 7 p.m. .... "Wink" by Jen Silverman  
January 9 & 10 at 7 p.m. .... "queens" by Martyna Majok  
February 6 & 7 at 7 p.m. .... "Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart  
March 6 & 7 at 7 p.m. .... "The Sea & The Stars" by Harrison David Rivers  
April 3 & 4 at 7 p.m. .... "Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing

### **"Wink" by Jen Silverman**

Sofie is an unhappy housewife. Gregor is her bread-winning husband. Dr. Frans is their psychiatrist. Wink is the cat. And Gregor has just skinned the cat. A dark comedy about the complicated and dangerous territory of the human heart.

### **"queens" by Martyna Majok**

The lives of two generations of immigrant women in Queens collide in a series of small apartments. When you are working so hard to move forward in America, what cannot—and should not—be left behind?

### **"Eden Prairie, 1971" by Mat Smart**

On the night *Apollo 15* lands on the moon, a draft dodger steals home to Eden Prairie, Minnesota from Canada. He risks arrest to deliver a message to a young woman from his high school class. This beautifully etched play challenges notions of our own bravery and the true cost of freedom.

### **"The Sea & The Stars" by Harrison David Rivers**

Simon is a lifeguard. Finn is terrified of water. Both are adrift, with broken hearts, returning to the tiny beach town of Jupiter and to families who need them. A play about love, karaoke, and the sea.

### **"Minneapolis/St. Paul" by Lee Blessing**

A celebrated crime novelist leads two different lives, one as Randall, the middle-aged husband and father, and the other as Mandy, the newly-wedded wife and stepmother. In a play that is both poignant and biting funny, Mandy/Randall struggles with the complexities and repercussions of an identity too vast to fit within binaries.

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

The Playwrights' Center champions playwrights and new plays to build upon a living theater that demands new and innovative works.

One of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, the Playwrights' Center focuses on both supporting playwrights and moving new plays toward production at theaters across the country. The Center has helped launch the careers of numerous nationally recognized artists, notably August Wilson, Lee Blessing, Suzan-Lori Parks, Jordan Harrison, Carlyle Brown, Craig Lucas, Jeffrey Hatcher, Melanie Marnich, and Kira Obolensky. Work developed through Center programs has been seen nationwide on such stages as Yale Rep, Woolly Mammoth, the Guthrie, Goodman, and many others.

### Programs and services

**The Core Writer program** gives 25-30 of the most exciting playwrights from across the country the time and tools to develop new work for the stage. All Core Writers receive play development workshops at the Center, in collaboration with prominent directors, actors, dramaturgs, and designers. Selected work by Core Writers makes up the Center's formal season of public readings: the PlayLabs festival and the Ruth Easton New Play Series. Core Writers are also promoted by the Center and provided opportunities through an extensive network of colleges and universities, cultural institutions, and producing theaters.

**Fellowships**, made possible by the McKnight and Jerome foundations, provide more than \$315,000 each year for residencies, commissions, and development funds. Through these fellowships, the Playwrights' Center functions as a home for:

- Jerome Fellows (four emerging American playwrights);
- Many Voices Fellows (two early-career playwrights of color, one Minnesota-based) and Many Voices Mentees (two Minnesota-based beginning playwrights of color);
- McKnight Fellows in Playwriting (two accomplished Minnesota-based playwrights);
- McKnight National Residency and Commission (one playwright selected annually from an impressive national pool); and
- McKnight Theater Artist Fellows (three exceptional Minnesota-based theater artists, other than playwrights).

**Membership** is open to all and provides more than 1,700 playwrights worldwide with tools, resources, and support. Benefits include a database of playwriting opportunities, online and in-person seminars and classes, access to readings with professional actors, dramaturgical services, and more. In addition, the Playwrights' Center's New Plays on Campus program serves dozens of colleges and universities nationwide, providing script-matching services, arranging playwright residencies, and offering immersive apprenticeships to student playwrights.

**Local and national partnerships** elevate the role of living playwrights. The Center works with several theaters each year to develop work for their stages. Recent collaborations include partnerships with Denver Center on Idris Goodwin's *Victory Jones and the Incredible One Woman Band*, Marin Theatre Company on Carson Kreitzer's *Lasso of Truth*, Mixed Blood on Aditi Kapil's *Brahman(i)* and *Shiv*, Pillsbury House Theatre on Tracey Scott Wilson's *Buzzer*, and The Walker Art Center and Elevator Repair Service on Sibyl Kempson's *Fondly, Collette Richland*. The Center also flies in 10-15 artistic leaders each year to meet writers and hear their work. The newly-launched Regulars program brings together a group of nearly 100 producing theaters in the United States who seek the support of the Center in order to meet new writers, develop their work, and move them into production.