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**BERKELEY REP'S GROUND FLOOR AWARDS RESIDENCIES  
TO 18 INNOVATIVE THEATRE PROJECTS*****Research and development facility for theatre invites groundbreaking artists for fifth  
Summer Residency Lab***

**March 9, 2016** – Today, **The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work** announces that it has selected 18 projects for its fifth Summer Residency Lab featuring works from more than 30 talented artists. This June, as part of an extraordinary laboratory for collaboration, some of the nation's most prominent and promising writers, directors, designers, performers, and composers will unite at the Theatre's Harrison Street campus over an intense four-week period to share ideas, break bread, and create new plays. Dozens more local and out-of-town actors and directors will join the Summer Residency Lab, bringing the number of participating artists close to 100.

From 468 applications, residencies have been awarded to **Lileana Blain-Cruz** (*Red Speedo*) and **Susan Soon He Stanton** (*Takarazuka!!!*), **Mia Chung** (*You For Me For You*), **Megan Cohen** (*The Horse's Ass and Friends*), **Eisa Davis** (*Bulrusher*), **Erin Edens** (*The Highway Plan*), **Dipika Guha** (*Mechanics of Love*), **Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble** and the **Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project** (*After All*), **Josh Kornbluth** (*Red Diaper Baby*), **Aaron Landsman** (*City Council Meeting*), **Josh Lefkowitz** (*Help Wanted: A Personal Search for Meaningful Employment at the Start of the 21st Century*), **James Magruder** (*Triumph of Love*), **Lisa Peterson** (*An Iliad*) and **Todd Almond** (*Girlfriend*), **Tori Sampson** (*Where Butterflies Go in the Winter*), **Jen Silverman** (*The Moors*), **Amy Staats** (*Hands*), **UNIVERSES** (*Party People*), **Joe Waechter** (*Good Ol' Boys*), and **Lauren Yee** (*The Hatmaker's Wife*).

"The Ground Floor began as an experiment, and in just a few short years has nestled itself squarely at the heart of our organization," says **Madeleine Oldham, director of The Ground Floor**. "We are delighted to celebrate the fifth anniversary of this dynamic program with such an eclectic group of wildly talented and curious artists who will make work with us this summer. June can't come fast enough."

The Ground Floor was launched with seed funding from the James Irvine Foundation's Artistic Innovation Fund, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and ArtPlace. This year's program is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtWorks, Bank of America, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, and individual supporters of Berkeley Rep's Create Campaign.

**M-O-R-E**

RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

**Here is a list of the artists and projects selected for the fifth annual Summer Residency Lab:**

- [Lileana Blain-Cruz](#) and [Susan Soon He Stanton](#) will collaborate on *Intimacy*, an experiment inspired by a psychological study featured in the *New York Times* article, “The 36 Questions That Lead to Love.” Why? Because Tinder exists.
- [Mia Chung’s](#) *Bloken English* is about translation and English as the dominant lingua franca.
- [Megan Cohen’s](#) *Truest* is a surreal Sam-Shepard-meets-*Thelma-and-Louise* drama in which two sisters pursue a uniquely twisted American Dream.
- In [Eisa Davis’](#) *Flowers are Sleeping*, a conceptual artist takes her work to the edge in a gallery installation that explores her black female body through the lens of music and popular representations.
- *The Meaning of Ants in My Kitchen* by **Erin Edens** is a play about the presence of absence and explores those palpable spaces that exist in our lives when something or someone goes missing.
- [Dipika Guha](#) and award-winning author [Maxine Hong Kingston](#) will develop *The Art of Gaman*, in which Kingston will portray Tomomi, an immigrant whose arrival in San Francisco coincides with the first wave of West Coast Japanese internment.
- A collaboration between [Kitka Women’s Vocal Ensemble](#), members of [the Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project](#), stage director/choreographer **Erika Chong Shuch**, composer **Janet Kutulas**, and librettist **Michelle Carter**, *Iron Shoes* is a neo-feminist, futuristic folk opera which transforms ancient Slavic fairy tales into a contemporary performance experience.
- [Josh Kornbluth’s](#) *The Bottomless Bowl* is an autobiographical monologue recounting Josh’s ongoing experiences as a volunteer caregiver at the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco. Having reached the age (55) when his father had a devastating stroke, Josh discovers through his encounters with the dying a new way of viewing mortality – his own, and those of his loved ones.
- *Squares* is a multimedia theatre project about nostalgia, memory, and technology. Created by [Mallory Catlett](#), [Aaron Landsman](#), [Jim Findlay](#), and photographer [Paul Shambroom](#), the piece is inspired by a collection of 583 found snapshots, all processed at a single lab in Minnesota in 1976.
- [Josh Lefkowitz](#) writes a poem a day, five years and counting. In *Poetry Project*, subject matters will include the following: love, break-ups, being alone, internet dating, various bar foods, Neruda, love again, heartbreak, baseball games, depression, Lexapro, and then, again, love.
- Writer [James Magruder](#) and actor [Danny Scheie](#) will collaborate on *Keep Your Forks*, in which protagonist Eddie Monell, a gay trophy husband cast off by his partner after 31 years, has to start over in Indianapolis at the age of 50 with no life skills, a bad attitude, and serious entitlement issues.

- [Lisa Peterson](#) and [Todd Almond](#) will do further work on their Berkeley Rep commission, *The Idea of Order*, a musical about the role of poetry in our lives, inspired by the life and work of Wallace Stevens.
- **Tori Sampson's *Cottoned Like Candy*** explores the value placed on bodies, how we accept the soul as a living anchor, and what can take place when we're forced to choose one over the other.
- **[Jen Silverman's \*My Father the Speeding Bullet: Nincest\*](#)** uses the frame of Anaïs Nin's love affair with her concert pianist father to create a gender-bending play-with-songs. She will collaborate with Pig Iron co-founder **[Dito Van Reigersberg](#)**, director **[Mike Donahue](#)**, scenic designer **[Dane Laffrey](#)**, and musician **[Max Vernon](#)**.
- **[Amy Staats](#)** will work with director **[Margot Bordelon](#)** and dramaturg/performer **[Megan Hill](#)** to develop ***Eddie and Dave: A Fictionalized Tale of Van Halen***, a comedy about the on, off, and then on again relationship between the painfully shy but brilliant Eddie Van Halen and the flamboyantly extroverted David Lee Roth.
- **[UNIVERSES](#)**, a nationally acclaimed performance ensemble (last seen at Berkeley Rep with [Party People](#)) will work on the ***August Wilson Poetry Project***, using the poetry of August Wilson as a foundation to create a musical poetic exploration that examines the power of legacy.
- ***The Untitled Hockey Project*** by **[Joe Waechter](#)** explores the dark implications of masculinity, sexuality, and fantasy around Minnesota's most popular sport: high school hockey.
- **[Lauren Yee](#)** will collaborate with director **[Benjamin Kamine](#)** on ***Untitled Cambodia Pop Play***, a joyously dark comedy about a Cambodian rock band's unexpected reunion at the height of the Khmer Rouge regime.

#### **ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP'S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK**

As the umbrella for all new play activity at Berkeley Rep, The Ground Floor is a bold initiative designed to raise the bar on the Tony Award-winning nonprofit's already successful record of artistic innovation. Think of it as an incubator for theatrical start-ups or a top-notch R&D facility for artists. For more information on each project, and for future announcements or opportunities to interact, visit [berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor](http://berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor).

#### **INTERACTING WITH THE SUMMER RESIDENCY LAB**

The Ground Floor's Summer Residency Lab aims to create a truly safe space for artists that is not influenced by the pressure of imminent public exposure, so — unlike many other development opportunities — it does not require recipients to present a reading or performance at the end of their residencies. Nonetheless, many projects will reach a stage where the creators request an invited audience or even engage community members as collaborators. For more information on each project, and for future announcements of opportunities to interact, visit:

<http://www.berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor/>.

#### **ABOUT BERKELEY REP**

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging

and established artists since 1968. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities — the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city.

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