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FERTILE GROUND ANNOUNCES 2021 GROW AWARD WINNERS

Nine Projects Awarded \$500 by Community Panel to Produce in Virtual 12th Annual New Works Festival

PORTLAND, OREGON – September 1, 2020 | The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works, a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA), is thrilled to announce the nine projects awarded \$500 to produce new work in the 2021 festival. For the 12th annual festival, Fertile Ground will become a free, virtual festival running Thursday, January 28 through Sunday, February 7, 2021.

Funded by a Regional Arts & Culture Council Arts Equity & Access grant, initially five \$500 awards were to be distributed. In recent days, two anonymous donors stepped in to fund four additional awards, compelled by a desire to support Fertile Ground's efforts to increase access for and participation for new voices. The newly instituted Fertile Ground GROW PANEL selected the GROW AWARD-winning projects.

FERTILE GROUND 2021 GROW AWARD WINNERS

Be Careful What you Ask For | from producer Family of Color Productions

Lilies, from producer Future Prairie

Oh Myh Dating Hell, from producer Aala Is Possible

Red/Act, from producer This Cherokee Rose

Sex Therapist Confesses, from producer Naked at My Age

Shooflies and Psilocybin, from producer Theatre Vertigo

Tadaima, from producer Eat Cake Gallery

the space/silence/sao in-between, from producer Do It for Mead

Women of America, from producer V.A.D.M. Realm

“It was exhilarating to read strong and diverse applications submitted by artists from a number of underrepresented communities in the region,” said Roy Arauz, GROW PANEL Chairperson. “It is exciting for me to see how willing the leadership at Fertile Ground has been to listen to the wants and needs of the community and be open to make the adjustments needed to get us to a more inclusive and equitable festival, not only in the request for proposals but also in the make-up of the GROW PANEL.”

(more)

PROCESS

Submissions for the GROW AWARD were open August 1 through August 26, 2020. Interested producers submitted project concepts and detailed plans addressing how they intend to create work designed for a digital platform. Projects were adjudicated by the GROW PANEL, a diverse community panel of artists and arts administrators. Evaluation criteria were based on the artistic merits of the outlined “act of creation” project concept, the proposal’s attention and planning for how the content will be recorded and presented for online production and viewing audience interest, and how the overall work addresses Fertile Ground’s aim to increase access and prioritize the work of underrepresented artists.

[Learn more here.](#)

GROW PANEL

The GROW PANEL, a newly convened decision-making body, adjudicated applications for the GROW AWARD. This extraordinary local artistic community cohort will also curate the full Fertile Ground Festival for the 2021 event. GROW PANEL members include: Sara Jean Accaurdi, Roy Arauz (Panel Chair), Michael Cavazos, Jane Comer, James Dixon, Tracy Cameron Francis, Robert Guitron, Heath Hyun Houghton, Anthony Hudson, Nicole Lane, Bianca McCarthy, Matthew Miller, Jeanette Mmunga, Val Yvette Peterson, Tess Raunig, Dre Slaman, Logan Starnes, Samson Syharath, and Mark Woodlief.

The GROW PANEL is composed of individuals whose identities encompass a spectrum of underrepresented voices, along with Fertile Ground and PATA representatives. Demonstrating Fertile Ground’s commitment to broadening representative inclusion of local artists, the panel was instituted in order to include a wider range of community artists and create an equity-infused decision-making process for the 12th annual festival. This shift offers an opportunity for Fertile Ground to evolve and ensure representation, and actively engage in pro-inclusivity and power-sharing practices.

[Learn more about the panelists here.](#)

FUNDING

Fertile Ground was recently awarded Regional Arts & Culture Council Arts Equity & Access funding (RACC). These funds are intended to formalize and expand the festival’s initiatives to address equity and access barriers to participation that exist for underrepresented (BIPOC, LGBTQ2IA+, Disabled) artists. The grant provided Fertile Ground with funds to distribute to artists/producers through the GROW AWARD program.

The RACC grant supports five of the nine artist/producers who received \$500 GROW AWARD to be used in the production of their Fertile Ground 2021 project. Thanks to two additional \$1000 anonymous donors, an additional four artist/producers were awarded a \$500 GROW AWARD.

BACKGROUND

In order to serve a wider range of artists and audiences in the community, as well as prepare to offer a virtual festival, Fertile Ground has undertaken significant structural changes to create an equity-infused process that prioritizes inclusivity for the 12th annual festival of new works. To accomplish these ambitious shifts, both the festival framework and decision-making structures have been revised, which are departures from previous years.

Fertile Ground’s virtual festival will present pre-recorded “acts of creation,” submitted by producing organizations and artist-producers. Recorded premieres will be live-dropped at scheduled intervals over the course of the 11-day festival, and streamed on Fertile Ground’s Facebook and YouTube channels. The show time slot for each premiere will be randomly assigned.

Submissions for the general 2021 Fertile Ground Festival are currently being accepted. The festival welcomes projects from a wide range of artists on a variety of topics and an array of artistic genres and disciplines.

“At this time, in our local and national landscape, our community needs artists’ voices more than ever,” said Dre Slaman, Fertile Ground Managing Director. “This re-imagined virtual Fertile Ground is about innovation, inclusion, and, most of all, the resilience of our local artistic community.”

“I believe we have a pivotal, vital opportunity to meaningfully invite new artistic voices into the festival while challenging all artists to innovate their work for this new kind of digital performance, and in doing so, evolves Fertile Ground,” said Nicole Lane, Fertile Ground Festival Director. “We are working on these changes intentionally and swiftly with more pieces falling into place daily. It has been inspiring to work with an incredible group of people to redesign Fertile Ground with our sights set on a bringing a vibrant festival of new work to at-home audiences that features inventive ‘acts of creation’ from an array of local artists who are emphatically representational of our entire community.”

KEY LINKS

[Fertile Ground Festival](#) overview information for Fertile Ground 2021

[GROW PANEL](#) headshots and biographies

[GROW AWARD](#) webpage

[Portland Area Theatre Alliance](#) (PATA) producer information page on applying for Fertile Ground 2021

KEY DATES

September 4 FG21 Application Submission Deadline

December 1 Fertile Ground 2021 Projects & Schedule Announced

January 28 FG21 Start

February 7 FG21 End

ABOUT FERTILE GROUND

The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works, a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA), is an 11-day arts festival held every January/February. The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works serves our community’s artists and audiences by offering a new works festival featuring a myriad of artistic endeavors by local artists.

The festival provides art-makers and producers a marketing umbrella and professional development opportunities. The annual festival offers a platform that fosters relationships between artists, producers and arts patrons, and deepens an appreciation for the abundant “acts of creation” in our community.

Fertile Ground is committed to the continued examination and expansion of efforts toward equity, inclusion, diversity and accessibility at every level. The festival works toward creating an inclusive, welcoming festival platform shared by intersectional identities and underrepresented voices across race, ethnicity, color, age, gender identity and sexual orientation, and physical or intellectual ability.

A program of the [Portland Area Theatre Alliance](#), Fertile Ground was launched in 2009 to provide a platform for local theatre companies to showcase their commitment to new work. The festival encourages all artists, of all backgrounds and disciplines, elevating a wide swath of voices and generating an exciting array of arts-centric offerings. Fertile Ground establishes for both artists and arts patrons that our community is truly fertile ground for creativity, innovation and daring acts of performance.

The Fertile Ground Festival of New Works is a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance and is funded in part by a 2020 Arts Equity & Access grant from the Regional Arts & Culture Council.

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