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## Artists Rep seeks playwright submissions for the **Oregon Play Prize**

**Winner will receive commission, development and production  
Public votes on play selection**

**PORTLAND, OREGON – November 9, 2015.** The play submission gates were thrown open on November 1 when the Table|Room|Stage ([T|R|S](#)) new play development program at Artists Repertory Theatre began accepting submissions for the new Oregon Play Prize. This is an unusual opportunity for Oregon playwrights to win a commission, work with a theatre on play development, and receive a first full production of their work at Artists Rep. Luan Schooler, Director of New Play Development and Dramaturgy, leads T|R|S and the Oregon Play Prize project.

### **The Oregon Play Prize**

The Oregon Play Prize is a \$10,000 commission for a new play written by an Oregonian. The playwright will be provided support in script development with space, consultations and readings, and the play will be produced by Artists Rep when it is ready.

To be considered for the prize, the plays must be written by a resident of Oregon. Scripts may be in any stage of completion, from a well-developed idea to a completed draft, but must be unproduced. Plays may be submitted to Artists Rep between November 1, 2015 and January 31, 2016. A panel of Artists Rep staff and volunteers will read all submissions and select three finalists. Descriptions and writing samples of the finalists will be posted on the [Oregon Play Prize](#) webpage late Spring 2016. Oregonians will vote for the one they most want to see produced and the prize will be awarded in Summer 2016. The timeline to production will depend on the readiness of the project. Complete submission guidelines are on posted on the website [here](#).

“We’re excited to read the work of playwrights from all over Oregon,” said Luan Schooler, Artists Rep Director of New Play Development and Dramaturgy. “The process we’ve created for the Oregon Play Prize will level the playing field so that an unknown writer has the same chance as a playwright who has already enjoyed successful productions. By involving the public in the final selection, we’re all embarking on a big adventure together.”

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### **About Table|Room|Stage**

In August 2014, Artists Rep was the recipient of a \$125,000 Oregon Community Foundation “Creative Heights” grant to establish a robust new play development program that will create opportunities for local and national playwrights, ensure that underrepresented voices are heard on stage, and establish Artists Rep and Portland as an engine for new play development.

[T|R|S](#) is a two-year pilot program that will commission eight new plays. Four of the eight commissions will go to writers of color, four will go to women, one play will be written for young adults. One of these commissions is the Oregon Play Prize, awarded to an Oregon writer.

With the T|R|S program, Artists Rep will offer commissions to eight playwrights over the next two years to start a new play, to finish one already begun or to revisit one that hasn't yet been fully realized. Artists Rep is committed to offering women, writers of color and writers of work for young audiences a place at the table. The inaugural commission of T|R|S has been awarded to Yussef El Guindi for the completion of his play, *The Talented Ones*. This play will be read and workshopped at Artists Rep during our 2015/16 season. Learn more about El Guindi's *The Talented Ones* [here](#).

T|R|S program initiatives include playwright commissions, the [Oregon Play Prize](#), and a new public theatre investigation program, [Fresh Eyes](#). A remarkable intention of T|R|S is to provide the public unique access to the process of new work development through [blogs](#) and an online video series that allow for further audience engagement. Through these strategies audiences can learn about a little-known part of the theatre world by witnessing the process of play planning, selection and development, as well as learning from writers and artistic teams about the processes and challenges in developing new work.

### **About Luan Schooler**

[Schooler](#) has an illustrious history as a dramaturg with theatre companies such as new play powerhouse Berkeley Rep, Juneau Alaska's Perseverance Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and locally, Boom Arts. She has worked extensively with a range of stylistically diverse writers in the process of developing new work and guiding new plays toward production. Schooler's experience also includes managing commissioning programs, writing for literary, development and marketing departments, as well as developing audience enrichment and community outreach programs.

Schooler has an extensive background as dramaturg, literary manager, writer, and actor, along with administrative experience in marketing and development. Schooler honed her skills as a company member of Perseverance Theatre in Alaska, working with then-artistic director Molly Smith on new plays and devised works with wide ranging artists including Paula Vogel, John Murrell, John Luther Adams and Darrah Cloud. She also conducted annual company audition tours to towns and remote villages throughout Alaska (where she enjoyed one of the most thrilling theatre experiences ever, a production of *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* by the community theatre in Nome). After leaving Alaska, Schooler became the Literary Manager/Dramaturg for Berkeley Rep. During seven years there, she worked with many luminary writers, including David Edgar, Naomi Iizuka, Salman Rushdie, Dominique Serrand, Rinde Eckert, Lillian Groag, Bridget Carpenter, Adam Rapp, and Robert Fagles, and astute directors Tony Taccone, Mark Wing-Davey, Stephen Wadsworth, and Lisa Peterson, among others. She has also worked on several devised pieces at Denver Center with artistic team Pavel Dobrusky and Per-Olav Sørensen, and worked as dramaturg at Oregon

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Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Festival, A Traveling Jewish Theatre, and Shaking the Tree Theatre. Schooler took a several year hiatus from theatre to explore the dramaturgy of artisanal cheese, opening a small cheese shop, Foster & Dobbs, in Portland with her husband. Delicious though that experience was, the hunger for stories of greater complexity and variety prevailed and she returned to Alaska in 2011 to adapt her brother's memoir *The Blue Bear* with Leon Ingulsrud (co-founder and co-artistic director, SITI Company) for Perseverance Theatre.

### **About Artists Repertory Theatre**

[Artists Rep](#) has become a significant presence in American Regional Theatre with a legacy of world, national and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. Our commitment to local artists is embodied by our company of Resident Artists, 24 professionals of varied theatre disciplines who are a driving force behind Artists Rep's creative output and identity. This commissioning program will position Artists Rep as an engine for new play development in the region and beyond. With this New Play Development program, Artists Rep strives to empower and support Oregon-based playwrights while also creating a Portland home for writers from around the country to develop their work. Additionally, this program will make a meaningful impact on equity in the arts by mandating opportunities for women writers and writers of color, and cultivating the next generation of theatre-goers by creating work specifically for young people (13 and up).

Artists Rep is Portland's premier mid-size regional theatre company led by Artistic Director Dámaso Rodriguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. Artists Rep offers eight bold and entertaining plays written by internationally acclaimed playwrights, and guided by esteemed directors. Artists Rep productions feature the work of a core group of accomplished Resident Artists, each with a shared history and a shorthand for collaboration, working alongside guest artists from Portland and beyond.

Artists Rep's mission is to engage diverse audiences in fresh, thought-provoking and intimate theatre. We are committed to world-class acting, directing, design and stagecraft that support new playwriting and aspire to embody great literature, moving audiences to truly feel — to *experience* — storytelling in a way that only the best live theatre can.

The 2015/16 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate and David & Christine Vernier. Season Media Sponsor is The Oregonian/OregonLive. Other season support comes from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, The Oregon Community Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, the Collins Foundation and The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.

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