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## **NEWS FROM THE O'NEILL**

### **EUGENE O'NEILL THEATER CENTER ANNOUNCES 2009 NATIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE SELECTIONS**

**Includes New Projects from Pulitzer Prize Winner Nilo Cruz and  
Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Winner Abbie Spallen**

**Tracey Scott Wilson and Katia Rubina  
Among Writers-In-Residence**

Waterford, Connecticut – The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center announced today the seven plays to be developed at the 2009 National Playwrights Conference. The selected Playwrights will spend the month of July at the O'Neill's Waterford, Connecticut campus developing and presenting staged readings of their work in the NPC's 45<sup>th</sup> season. Tickets for these readings go on sale Wednesday, June 10.

Chosen from nearly 800 plays through the O'Neill's Open Submissions process—which allows any playwright, with or without agent representation, to submit and utilizes readers from across the country to choose works based on merit, without authorship attribution—these projects will undergo the O'Neill's development process, employing professional creative and support staff, including directors, dramaturgs, actors, and designers.

National Playwrights Conference Artistic Director **Wendy C. Goldberg** said, "In my fifth season, it is my great pleasure to bring both new and returning artists to the O'Neill. The season represents the most gifted storytellers of our time, some quite new and some more established. I am honored to welcome Pulitzer Prize Winner Nilo Cruz and to welcome back Julia Cho to our summer community. The O'Neill continues to be a major force in the landscape of American Theatre, serving as an artistic home to hundreds of writers. This summer adds to that legacy, and to the legacy of the O'Neill's process, as we continue to nurture the next generation of storytellers."

That legacy includes Goldberg who has seen, in her five years as Artistic Director, many National Playwrights Conference projects—including Adam Bock’s *The Receptionist*, Lee Blessing’s *Great Falls*, Regina Taylor’s *Magnolia*, and Deborah Zoe Laufer’s *End Days*—go on to successful world premieres at theaters such as Manhattan Theatre Club, Second Stage, The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf and The Magic.

Wendy C. Goldberg will be directing Nilo Cruz’s *The Color of Desire* and additional directors will be announced shortly.

Executive Director **Preston Whiteway** remarked, “The National Playwrights Conference at the O’Neill continues to lead the field in play discovery and development, and our track record shows the value of the O’Neill process. Recently developed shows continue to premiere around the country and in New York with full productions. I’m pleased to welcome our writers this summer, who represent some of the best playwriting today. I am sure we will be following these pieces for years to come.”

**THE 2009 NATIONAL PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE SELECTIONS ARE:**

***THE LANGUAGE ARCHIVE by Julia Cho***

*Performances: Saturday, July 4 at 8:15 pm; Sunday, July 5 at 2:00 pm*

George is a linguist. He knows many, many languages. But when his marriage starts to unravel, he suddenly finds himself utterly at a loss for the right words. *The Language Archive* was commissioned by Roundabout Theatre Company.

***FIRE WORK by Lauren Gunderson***

*Performances: Thursday, July 9 at 8:15 pm; Friday, July 10 at 7:15 pm*

Ana and her father Caleb run a small fireworks shop in a nowhere town in an unforgiving corner of the world. One day, Ben walks in...and the fireworks really begin. *Fire Work* is a love story about a strong woman, strong chemistry, a harsh landscape, and harsher choices you make not just to survive, but to thrive.

***THE COLOR OF DESIRE by Nilo Cruz***

***Director: Wendy C. Goldberg***

*Performances: Saturday, July 11 at 8:15 pm; Sunday, July 12 at 3:15 pm*

Havana, 1960. As the revolution heats up, a dashing American businessman hires a young Cuban actress for a role unlike any she’s ever played: the woman he loved and lost. A vibrant and poetic exploration of the lost love affair between America and Cuba.

***HOUSE OF GOLD by Gregory Moss***

*Performances: Thursday, July 16 at 8:15 pm; Friday, July 17 at 7:15 pm*

A lost little girl is brought back to a house, very much like the one she grew up in, by a suspicious Man and Woman, who have recently lost (or misplaced) their own child. While negotiating with the strange characters that inhabit this home - a seedy Detective who lives in the basement and a shady man with a van who sits parked outside - the girl befriends Jasper, a plump, surly 13 year-old white boy who lives down the street. The children form an awkward friendship, in an attempt to survive the increasingly menacing forces threatening them from inside their own homes.

***SPOON LAKE BLUES by Josh Tobiessen***

*Performances: Saturday, July 18 at 3:15 pm; Sunday, July 19 at 3:15 pm*

In an attempt to save their family home from a constant barrage of debt collectors, two brothers, Denis and Brady, start robbing the homes of their rich neighbors in the quickly gentrifying mountain town of Spoon Lake. Everything is going according to plan until Brady develops a crush on Caitlin, a young African American college student whose wealthy family Denis and Brady robbed the day before. While Caitlin immediately takes pity on the brothers' dire situation her attempts to help out the locals end up causing problems of their own.

***CARTHAGE by Emily Schwend***

*Performances: Thursday, July 23 at 8:15 pm; Friday, July 24 at 7:15 pm*

Complications arise and family secrets emerge when Hal returns to Carthage, Missouri, for the first time in six years to help his brother transition from state institution to regular life. Bryan, however, isn't about to make the process quick and painless, forcing his brother to confront the deep-rooted issues that have kept them apart and brought them together throughout their lives.

***BOGWOG\* by Abbie Spallen***

*Performances: Saturday, July 25 at 3:15 pm; Sunday, July 26 at 3:15 pm*

*Bogwog* is a play dealing with the very beginning of the conflict in Northern Ireland. A parallel with the conflicts in Iraq and Gaza and of particular resonance to events over the past weeks, *Bogwog* deals with the military intervention in Ulster and its fallout through a half-Irish, half-British family living in the North of England. It's about waking up one morning and finding yourself the enemy. It's about having to answer questions about the life you live and the person you are because of the actions of others, done in your name.

\***BOGWOG** is the Irish Project at the O'Neill, and supported with funding from the Xerox Foundation.

In addition to the chosen projects, the O'Neill will invite three playwrights to be writers-in-residence as part of the 2009 NPC including **Katia Rubina**, a multi-discipline writer from Russia who joins the O'Neill's long history of US-Russian playwright exchanges that started in the early 1980s and **Tracey Scott Wilson**, whose play *The Good Negro* received rave reviews and is currently enjoying an extended run at The Public Theater in New York. One more playwright-in-residence will be announced shortly.

Schedules are subject to change. Tickets will be on sale beginning Wednesday, June 10. Please call the O'Neill Box Office at 860-443-1238 or visit <http://www.theoneill.org> for times, prices and reservations. Outdoor performances will be moved indoors in the event of rain.

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, founded in 1964, is the pre-eminent center for the development of new works and new voices for the American theater. It has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and 2,500 emerging artists. Scores of projects

developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full productions at other theaters around the world, including Broadway, off-Broadway and major regional theaters. The O'Neill itself is the winner of a special Tony Award, the National Opera Award, the Jujamcyn Award for Theater Excellence and the Arts and Business Council Encore Award. The O'Neill's programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, Puppetry Conference, Cabaret Conference, National Critics Institute, and the National Theater Institute, which includes semester-long, fully accredited intensive theater training programs in Waterford and Moscow and a six-week accredited summer program, Theatermakers. In addition, the O'Neill owns and operates the Monte Cristo Cottage, a National Historic Landmark and the childhood home of Nobel Prize-winning and four-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Eugene O'Neill. For more information regarding the Center, please visit the O'Neill website at [www.theoneill.org](http://www.theoneill.org) or call 860-443-5378.

## **BRIEF PLAYWRIGHT BIOGRAPHIES – NPC 2009**

### **Julia Cho**

Julia Cho's plays include *The Piano Teacher*, *Durango*, *The Winchester House*, *BFE*, *The Architecture of Loss* and *99 Histories*. Her work has been produced by South Coast Repertory, The Vineyard Theatre, The Public Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop, East West Players and Theatre@Boston Court among others. Honors include the Barrie Stavis Award, the Claire Tow Award for Emerging Artists and the L. Arnold Weissberger Award. An alumna of the Juilliard School and NYU's Graduate Dramatic Writing Program, Julia is currently a resident playwright at New Dramatists.

### **Lauren Gunderson**

Lauren Gunderson is a NYC (by way of Atlanta) playwright, screenwriter, and short story author. She has an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU Tisch and is a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has received national praise and awards including the Berrilla Kerr Award for American Theatre, Young Playwright's Award, Eric Bentley New Play Award, Essential Theatre Prize, and many others. Her play *Emilie: Le Marquise Du Châtelet Defends Her Life at the Petite Theatre at Cirey Tonight*, premieres at South Coast Rep April, 2009. She has been produced off-Broadway (*Parts They Call Deep*), off-off Broadway (*Sus Manos*), had many new plays produced regionally at Synchronicity Performance Group, Dad's Garage Theatre, Essential Theatre, Theatre Emory, Marin Theatre, and more. She is currently working on her second commission for South Coast Rep; and has been commissioned by The Alliance Theatre's Collision Project, Actors Express Theatre, Dad's Garage Theatre, Theatrical Outfit, City University of New York, and Synchronicity Performance Group. *Leap* was published with Theatre Emory's Playwriting Center. She has developed plays with Second Stage, The Magic Theatre, Kitchen Dog Theatre, Actor Express and Horizon Theatre, Portland Center Stage, WORDBridge, Brave New Works, and others. She received a Sloan Science Script Award for her screenplay *Grand Unification*; and her science short stories and poems have won national awards and publications.

### **Nilo Cruz**

Nilo Cruz is a young Cuban-American playwright whose work has been produced widely around the United States and Europe. His plays are many and include *Night Train to Bolina*, *Dancing on her Knees*, *A Park in Our House*, *Two Sisters and a Piano*, *A Bicycle Country*, *Hortensia and the Museum of Dreams*, *Lorca in a Green Dress*, *Anna in the Tropics*, *Beauty of the Father* and *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and translations of Lorca's *Dona Rosita the Spinster*, *The House of Bernarda Alba* and *Life Is A Dream*. He is currently writing the book for the musical HAVANA! with music by Frank Wildhorn and a screenplay about Alina, daughter of Fidel Castro. Nilo has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including two NEA/TCG National Theatre Artist Residency grants, a Rockefeller Foundation grant, San Francisco's W. Alton Jones award and a Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays award. His work has been seen at the McCarter Theatre in New Jersey, at New York's Shakespeare Festival's Public Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club and Repertorio Español, at South Coast Rep, at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, New York Theatre Workshop, Magic Theatre, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Washington's Studio Theatre, Florida Stage. Internationally, his plays have been produced in London at Hamstead Theatre and The Finborough and RADA and in cities throughout Spain including Madrid and Seville. In 2003 he won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his play *Anna in the Tropics* and in 2009 he won *The Laura Pels Mid-career Award*.

### **Gregory Moss**

Gregory Moss is playwright, performer and director from Cambridge MA. He holds an MFA from Brown University's Graduate Playwriting Program. His plays include *House of Gold*, *The Argument*, *Billy Witch*, *Orange*, *Hat and Grace* and *punkplay*. His work has been developed with or produced by Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, The A.R.T., The Atlantic Center for the Arts, The Empty Space, Playwrights Horizons, PlayPenn, Soho Rep and New York Theatre Workshop. Gregory is the recipient of a 2006-2007 Lucille Lortel Playwriting Fellowship, and a 2008 Millay Colony Residency. Since 1999 he has run Independent Submarine Productions, a company dedicated to generating original, challenging art in a variety of media.

### **Josh Tobiessen**

In 2000 Josh moved to Galway, Ireland, originally to complete a Masters degree in Theatre and Drama. Upon completion of his degree he started a Galway based theatre company named Catastrophe with two other graduates. Over the next few years, eight of his plays were produced by Catastrophe including *Bag of Piranhas* (Dublin Fringe Festival '02), *Up the Yard* (Waterford Spraoi Festival '04) and *Parallel Parking* (Galway Arts Festival '04) for which he received a commissioning grant from the Arts Council of Ireland. As well as his work with Catastrophe, he taught playwriting classes at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and improvisational acting classes at Galway Youth Theatre. In 2007 Josh graduated from UCSD's MFA playwriting program where his plays *Burnt Out*, *Election Day* and *Red State Blue Grass* have been performed at the Baldwin New Play Festival ('05 through '07). *Election Day* was a finalist in the Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia and received its professional premiere in 2007 with Second Stage Theatre's Uptown Series in

New York. *Election Day* is published by Samuel French and in the Smith and Kraus anthology, *New Playwrights, Best Plays of 2008*. *Spoon Lake Blues* received a reading earlier this year at Aspen Theatre Masters and Palm Beach Dramaworks' *New Bridges Fest* in Palm Beach Florida.

### **Emily Schwend**

Emily Schwend is a second-year playwriting fellow in the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at the Juilliard School in New York. Her full-length plays include *The Children of Dentists*, *Carthage* (winner of the 2009 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize), *Man-Made*, *Splinters*, (2009 finalist in the Alliance Theatre's Kendeda Graduate Playwright competition), and *Callback* (2007 New Works for Young Women competition winner, 2007 John Golden Prize for playwriting). She is a two-time Lecomte du Nouy prize recipient, and she graduated with a BFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2007.

### **Abbie Spallen**

Abbie Spallen's first full-length play, *Abeyance*, was produced by Druid Theatre Company as a Druid Debut and directed by Kirsten Sheridan. Her second, *Pumpgirl* premiered at the Traverse Theatre as part of the 2006 Edinburgh Festival. A Bush Theatre production, directed by Mike Bradwell, it transferred to London and won the 2007 Susan Smith Blackburn Award. It had its American Premiere at the Manhattan Theatre Club in 2007 and its Irish premiere at the Lyric Theatre in 2008 where it earned an Irish Times Theatre Award nomination for best new play. *Pumpgirl* is published by Faber and Faber. Abbie's short play *Shaving the Pickle* had its premiere in 59E59 Theatre in New York for Origin Theatre Company's First Irish Theatre Festival. In 2009 her play *Strandline* will have its world premiere in Dublin with Fishamble Theatre Company. In 2007, Abbie won the Tony Doyle Award for screenwriting from the BBC for her screenplay *Seven Drunken Knights*. *Pumpgirl* the feature film, adapted by Abbie Spallen for NI Screen/BBC NI had its first screening at the Belfast Film Festival in April 2009. She has recently completed an attachment to the National Theatre in London and is under commission to Ulysses Productions/Magma Films, Pentabus Theatre Company and The Wire at R3.

## **Brief Writers-In-Residence Biographies – NPC 2009**

### **Katia Rubina**

Katia Rubina is a Russian painter, graphic artist, writer and playwright. She was born in Moscow, to Russian composer Vladimir Rubin and actress Maria Scuratova. She began her studies when she was five years old and her interest in the music inspired her paintings. She studied art from 1983 to 1988 at Strogonovsky High Art School and was fond of Eastern culture. Katia has been a participant of numerous Moscow and international exhibitions, is a member of the Creative Union of Artists of Russia, and won the 2007 All-Russian drama competition for her play, *Characters*. She lives in Moscow. Her works are in museums and private collections in Russia, Europe and USA.

**Tracey Scott Wilson**

Productions include *The Good Negro* and *The Story* at The Public Theater/NYSF. Additional productions: *Order My Steps* for Cornerstone Theater's Black Faith/AIDS project in Los Angeles; and *Exhibit #9*, which was produced in New York City by New Perspectives Theatre and Theatre Outrageous; *Leader of the People*, produced at New Georges Theatre; two ten-minute plays produced at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis; a ten-minute play produced at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Tracey has had readings at the New York Theatre Workshop, New Georges Theatre, the Public Theatre and Soho Writers Centre in London.

She earned two Van Lier Fellowships from the New York Theatre Workshop, a residency at Sundance Ucross and Sundance Theatre Laboratory and is the winner of the 2001 Helen Merrill Emerging Playwright Award, the 2004 AT&T Onstage Award, the 2004 Whiting Award, the 2004 Kessler Prize, the 2007 Weissberger Playwriting Award as well as the 2007 Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship. Ms. Wilson holds a Master's degree in English Literature from Temple University.

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