



new plays for the nation's capital  
for playwrights, for playmakers, for playgoers

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE INKWELL PROUDLY PRESENTS  
THE 2009 INKUBATOR FESTIVAL**

September 24<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup>  
at the H Street Playhouse

**Washington, DC's resource for new play development showcases  
18 raw new plays by America's  
most talented up-and-coming writers**

The Inkwell — the three-year-old theatre company that focuses exclusively on new play development — is proud to announce the line-up for its **second INKUBATOR FESTIVAL** (September 24<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup> at the H Street Playhouse), an unprecedented exploration of playmaking in the nation's capital. The festival will showcase 18 new plays from the most exciting up-and-coming writers in America, allowing audiences to engage with playwrights, directors, actors, and dramaturges as they put these plays on their feet, in many cases for the first time.

"We chose these inventive and wildly theatrical plays from a pool of more than 400," says **The Inkwell's Artistic Director Jessica Burgess**. "These plays explore everything from race relations to body shape, immaculate conception to *The Odyssey* in the most imaginative of ways. We believe we have tapped into the next great generation of playwrights, and we are so proud to help them take the next step in their unfolding careers here in our nation's capital."

"I only wish I had had such a resource as The Inkwell in Washington, DC when I had first started out," says **award-winning playwright Karen Zacarias**, whose work is produced at major theatres in DC and throughout the U.S. "I was traveling all over the country to receive the support and encouragement that The Inkwell is providing to these emerging writers."

"Washington, DC needs a developmental center for new plays, a place where early-career playwrights can find support for their growth and



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experimentation,” says **Jason Loewith, Executive Director of the National New Play Network**. “The Inkwell’s ambition to be that center – like The Lark Play Development Company in New York or the Bay Area Playwrights Foundation in San Francisco – is a tremendous opportunity for our community’s artists.”

Audiences will have the chance to enjoy bite-sized excerpts of 13 plays at **three SHOWCASE READINGS**, each organized around a different theme. The first occurs September 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., featuring four local writers — Cameron McNary, Anne M. McCaw, Lisa M. Hodsell, and Q Terah Jackson — exploring everything from the politics of the Reformation to the collision of fantasy and family dynamics through Hip Hop. Following this SHOWCASE READING is a **CONVENING OF LOCAL PLAYWRIGHTS**, a facilitated discussion among writers based in the Washington, DC area to explore how The Inkwell can meet their needs and goals. Subsequent SHOWCASE READINGS are on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 p.m. and October 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

The Inkwell will also present **three INKREADINGS**, staged readings of the latest drafts of full-length plays coming out of a four-day intensive rehearsal process. Playwrights will be in town for rehearsals and readings. On September 26<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m., The Inkwell presents the INKREADING of STRIKE/SEEK/FIND by Jason Gray Platt, a new take on *The Odyssey* that offers a chilling portrait of the family that the great warrior left behind. The Inkwell then offers CYGNUS by Susan Soon He Stanton for the second INKREADING on October 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. Stanton spins a dark fairy tale where a burnt feather may illuminate the possibility of immaculate conception. The final INKREADING will be of TETHER by Julie Taiwo Oni on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., an examination sisterhood, coming of age, and race, all played out around a tetherball pole.

The Inkwell ends the festival with an **INKUBATOR PRODUCTION** of Melissa Blackall’s THE F WORD, the culminating step in an 18-month development process with The Inkwell. A biting commentary on America’s obsession with FAT, the play follows various bodies through a series of vignettes as they struggle to find their perfect shape — physically, psychically, and spiritually. THE F WORD is directed by Jessica Lefkow, whose production of *Honey Brown Eyes* at Theatre J received the Charles McArthur Award for Outstanding New Play.

All festival events will be held at H Street Playhouse (www.hstreetplayhouse.com), 1365 H Street, NE, Washington, DC. All events are free, although we suggest a donation of \$10. A full calendar of events can be found at The Inkwell’s website, [www.inkwelltheatre.org](http://www.inkwelltheatre.org).



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### **ABOUT THE INKWELL**

Launched at the Page-to-Stage Festival at The Kennedy Center in September 2007, The Inkwell is the wellspring for new theatrical work in the nation's capital, serving as a vital resource for exploring and encouraging the process for making new plays. Through a wide range of programming for playwrights, playmakers, and playgoers, The Inkwell aims to:

- nurture a generation of playwrights who produce work with a unique rhythm and voice, that explodes viscerally and psychologically off the page, that creates impossible worlds and pushes the boundaries of theater as we know it;
- train the talented and dedicated corps of playmakers in the Washington, DC area to deeply and thoughtfully engage in the process of making new plays; and,
- create an infrastructure within the DC theater community that supports and encourages the development of new plays.

Thus, The Inkwell envisions a new phase in American Theater centered in our Nation's capital, where playwrights, playmakers, and playgoers here in Washington, DC are integral to the creation of the most innovative and thought-provoking plays in the country.



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**2009 INKUBATOR FESTIVAL**  
**18 plays in development**  
**and a master class in dramaturgy**

From full productions to staged readings and showcases, The Inkwell's **second INKUBATOR FESTIVAL** shines light on new work from across the country at different stages of development, from first draft to 20<sup>th</sup>.

<b>Inkubator Festival 2009 at The H Street Playhouse</b>						
<b>Calendar of Events</b>						
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>9/21</b>	<b>9/22</b>	<b>9/23</b>	<b>9/24</b> <b>8p Open Rehearsal:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>9/25</b>	<b>9/26</b> <b>8p InkReading:</b> <i>strive/seek/find</i> by Jason Gray Platt	<b>9/27</b> <b>3p Playwright Showcase:</b> Local Playwrights
<b>9/28</b>	<b>9/29</b>	<b>9/30</b> <b>8p Open Rehearsal:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/1</b>	<b>10/2</b>	<b>10/3</b> <b>11a Master Class:</b> The Art of New Play Dramaturgy with Michael Bigelow Dixon  <b>8p Playwright Showcase:</b> By The Book	<b>10/4</b> <b>11:30a Master Class (cont.):</b> The Art of New Play Dramaturgy with Michael Bigelow Dixon
<b>10/5</b> <b>8p InkReading:</b> <i>Cygnus</i> by Susan Soon He Stanton	<b>10/6</b> <b>8p Open Rehearsal:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/7</b>	<b>10/8</b>	<b>10/9</b>	<b>10/10</b> <b>3p InkReading:</b> <i>Tether</i> by Julie Taiwo Oni	<b>10/11</b>
<b>10/12</b>	<b>10/13</b> <b>8p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/14</b> <b>8p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/15</b> <b>8p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/16</b> <b>8p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/17</b> <b>3p Playwright Showcase:</b> Language on the Edge <b>8p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall	<b>10/18</b> <b>2p Inkubator Production:</b> <i>The F Word</i> by Melissa Blackall



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**Open Rehearsals: *The F Word* by Melissa Blackall**

September 24<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.

The Inkwell pulls back the curtain to peek into the process of pulling a new play off the page and onto its feet. For those curious about how the rehearsal process works, the company of *The F Word* opens its doors to onlookers three times during its three-week rehearsal period. \$10 suggested donation.

**InkReading: *strive/seek/find* by Jason Gray Platt**

September 26<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.

Jason Gray Platt, in his third year of Columbia University's playwriting MFA program, dips into *The Odyssey* to paint a chilling portrait of the family that the warrior leaves behind. Christopher Gallu directs this developmental workshop, culminating in a staged reading featuring Evan Casey as Telemachus, Lindsay Haynes as Calliope, Valerie Leonard as Penelope, and Nigel Reed as her many suitors. \$10 suggested donation.

**Playwright Showcase: Local Playwrights Convening**

Featuring excerpts from *Beggar at its Feet*, *20Twenty*, *Of Dice and Men*, and *Erasmus*

September 27<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m.

The Inkwell gathers local playwrights to discuss how DC's new play development resource can better serve the needs and goals of the community. The event begins with a showcase of DC-area finalists from The Inkwell's national call for submissions – Anne M. McCaw, Q. Terah Jackson, Cameron McNary, and Lisa M. Hodsoll – followed by an open conversation about how The Inkwell can support DC-area playwrights. The discussion will continue at a raucous happy hour at The Argonaut. Free to attend showcase and discussion, with happy hour specials at The Argonaut.

**Master Class: The Art of New Play Dramaturgy**

October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11 a.m. and October 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m.

Dramaturg, teacher, and author Michael Bigelow Dixon leads an eight-hour master class on interpretation of innovative material, effective collaboration with playwrights, navigation of the rehearsal and revision process, and 14 ways to analyze a new play. Mr. Dixon has supervised and participated in the commissioning, development, and production of more than 800 new plays, including work by Tony Kushner, Regina Taylor, David Henry Hwang, Naomi Iizuka, Jose Rivera, Lynn Nottage, Charles Mee, and Jane Martin. Enrollment fee: \$100. Reservations required: [reservations@inkwelltheatre.org](mailto:reservations@inkwelltheatre.org)



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**Playwright Showcase: By The Book**

Featuring excerpts from *Clementine and the Cyber Ducks*, *Genesis*, *The Missing Pieces*, *The Pillow Book*, and *The Owl Girl*

October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8 p.m.

The Inkwell whips up an evening of theatre tapas with bite-sized excerpts from five plays inspired by literature and history, selected from The Inkwell's national call for submissions. With inspiration from sources as diverse the Bible, *Playboy* magazine, American folk songs, geisha, and the Gaza Strip, playwrights Krista Knight, Alexis Roblin, Nick Zagone, Anna Moench, and Monica Raymond create imaginative new worlds for the stage. Rorschach Theatre's Randy Baker will direct. \$10 suggested donation.

**InkReading: *Cygnus* by Susan Soon He Stanton**

October 5<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.

Playwright Susan Soon He Stanton, a Hawaiian-born Yale University MFA candidate, spins a dark fairy tale about a young woman whose guardian angel rescues her from would-be rapists. In this developmental workshop culminating in a staged reading, directed by The Inkwell's artistic director Jessica Burgess, a burnt feather may illuminate the possibility of immaculate conception, and two broken feet might be a sign of the weight of sin. \$10 suggested donation.

**InkReading: *Tether* by Julie Taiwo Oni**

October 10<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m.

Julie Taiwo Oni, a recent recipient of an MFA in playwriting from University of Southern California, crafts a moving examination of sisterhood, coming of age, and race in America. Lach and Lam are 15 year-old twin girls, one black and the other white, who live their life on the tetherball court. Like all sisters, they squabble and make up; like all twins, they are each other's mirrors – and opposites. \$10 suggested donation.

**Playwright Showcase: Language on the Edge**

Featuring excerpts from *Monument*, *The Hairy Dutchman*, *Spake*, *Beautiful Province (Belle Provence)*, and *Balls*

October 17 at 3 p.m.

From Shakespeare to present, playwrights have radically reinvented language to help us examine the way in which we communicate. Snippets from linguistically innovative plays, selected from The Inkwell's national call for submissions, will showcase the surprising and delightful wordplay of playwrights Doug Dolcino, Andy Bragen, David L. Williams, Clarence Coe, and Jonathan Yukich. The Inkwell's Lee Liebeskind will direct. \$10 suggested donation.



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**Inkubator Production: *The F Word* by Melissa Blackall**

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. and October 18<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.

The Inkwell presents Melissa Blackall's biting play about America's obsession with the dirtiest word in the English language: FAT. Blackall holds the mirror up to our body-obsessed culture with this ensemble-driven collage piece. After nearly three years of developmental collaboration, ranging from an Inkubator Reading process in 2008 to a showcase at the Kennedy Center's Page to Stage Festival, this Inkubator production of *The F Word* marks a culmination of The Inkwell's partnership with playwright Blackall. Director Jessica Lefkow, whose production of *Honey Brown Eyes* at Theatre J garnered the Charles McArthur Award for Outstanding New Play, leads this production of a political play-in-progress. The production features Jessica Lynn Rodriguez, Prairie Griffith, Karl Bittner, Jason McIntosh, Alice Gibson, Susan Holliday, and Mark Ludwick. The design team includes Matt Soule, Adam Magazine\*, Maggie Clifton, Suzen Mason\*, Matt Nielson, and Zachary Borovay. Choreography is provided by Melissa-Leigh Bustamante. \$10 suggested donation. Reservations encouraged: [reservations@inkwelltheatre.org](mailto:reservations@inkwelltheatre.org)

\* A founding member of The Inkwell.