FOR RELEASE ON THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

“BATHHOUSE.PPTX”
A NEW PLAY BY JESÚS I. VALLES
HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS WINNER OF THE
16th ANNUAL YALE DRAMA SERIES PRIZE

PLAYWRIGHT JEREMY O. HARRIS WHO PRESIDED OVER THE SELECTION PROCESS CALLS PLAY “ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING SPECULITVE FICTIONS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN YEARS."

SHORT LIST INCLUDES INTERNATIONAL ENTRIES
“RACISM: an unfocused theatre essay” BY ASA HAYNES
“TRUNK BRIEF JOCK THONG” BY DJ HILLS
“CLASS” BY CHLOÉ MYERSON
“WHITE GIRLS GANG” BY RIANNA SIMONS

CELEBRATION OF 2023 WINNERS KICKS-OFF INAUGURAL WRITING RESIDENCY, “Substratum,” AT MONTEVERDI TUSCANY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GUCCI

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New York, NY (March 23, 2023) – The 2023 Yale Drama Series Prize, one of the theater world’s most prestigious playwriting awards, now in its sixteenth year, will be presented to Jesús I. Valles for their new American play, Bathhouse, a new work that was selected from more than 1,500 entries. The announcement was made jointly by playwright Jeremy O. Harris who chose the winning play, and Francine Horn of the David Charles Horn Foundation, the sole funding organization of the annual prize.

The 2023 Prize winner and short-listed winners will be celebrated at a new month-long residency lead by Mr. Harris, called Substratum, in collaboration with Gucci and hotel Monteverdi Tuscany. Hosted by the luxury boutique hotel, fellows will stay in a medieval village, where their plays will be read live, surrounded by the Val d’Orcia. Mr. Harris, the Tony-nominated author of Slave Play and Yale alum, was the presiding playwright of this year’s selection process, joining an august list of previous judges: playwrights Edward Albee, David Hare, John Guare, Marsha Norman, Nicholas Wright, Ayad Akhtar and Paula Vogel. In its inaugural year, Substratum’s fellows will be made up of the four shortlisted playwrights as well as emerging screenwriter Raffi Donatich.

Ms. Horn said, “I am delighted by the evolution of this Prize. Edward Albee launched us by giving his support and name to a new competition more than 15 years ago. David Hare then confirmed our international reach and gave us the opportunity to have the winning playwright’s work celebrated and read at The National Theatre.”
John Guare brought us to Lincoln Center, and Ms. Norman, Mr. Wright, Mr. Akhtar and Ms. Vogel all added their specific voices to the selection of our winners over the years. And now, true to his word, Jeremy O. Harris has expanded the opportunities for our winners by establishing this new residency. Substratum is a wonderful companion of the Yale Drama Series, and I am thrilled for this first class of playwrights to be celebrated at Substratum.”

Fellows of Substratum will also receive financial assistance throughout their stay, and will have on-site mentorship opportunities with creatives, such as rapper Kevin Abstract, filmmaker Janicza Bravo, documentarian Alexander Nanau, playwright Jordan Tannahill, Eliza Hittman, Jasmine Lee-Jones, to name only a few. The residency will close with a showcase of the fellows’ winning works, which will be open for the public to attend. Mr. Harris hopes that the residence will offer an abundance of new opportunities for artists to grow and have their work seen and celebrated.

“If only the entire theater world was as democratic, meritocratic, and pluralistic as the Yale Drama Prize,” said Harris in a statement in 2022. “There is an entire generation of playwrights who have been fighting to be Heard – especially in light of the pause button pushed by the pandemic, and this is our opportunity to thrust a chosen few directly into the global cultural conversation.”

As the 2023 Prize winner, Jesús I. Valles receives the David Charles Horn Prize of $10,000, as well as publication of the winning play by Yale University Press and a celebratory event to be held at Substratum.

Jesús I. Valles, a Mexican immigrant, is an educator, storyteller, performer, and poet from Cuidad Juarez. For their playwrighting work Valles has received awards and support from OUTsider Festival, Teatro Vivo, The VORETEX, The Kennedy Center, New York Theatre Workshop and The Flea. Jesús is currently an MFA playwrighting student at Brown University.

In describing their winning play, Valles said, “This work is a group project for perverts. Somewhere between lecture, re-enactment, and cruising ground, an informative presentation on the history of cleanliness and bathing starts to burst at the seams with the ghosts of a bathhouse at the end of the world.”

About Bathhouse.pptx, Jeremy O. Harris exclaimed, “This is one of the most exciting speculative fictions I’ve encountered in years, using a unique dramaturgy to explore a queer history that is quickly being erased. It brought to mind the works of many heroes like Samuel Delaney, Martin Crimp, and Kathy Acker.”

The 2023 short list of plays includes Racism: an unfocused theatre essay by Asa Haynes; Trunk Brief Jock Thong by DJ Hills; Class by Chloe Myerson; and White Girls Gang by Rianna Simons.

Now in its twentieth year of existence and sixteenth year of awarding, the Yale Drama Series Prize is the internationally recognized, preeminent playwriting award in cooperation with Yale University Press and is solely sponsored by the David Charles Horn Foundation, which has provided funding for the Yale Drama Series for nearly twenty years. The Prize is usually awarded annually for a play by an emerging playwright after multiple readings by distinguished playwrights of our time. The Yale Drama Series is an annual international open submission competition for emerging
playwrights who are invited to submit original, unpublished, full-length, English language plays for consideration. All entries are read blindly.

ABOUT THE YALE DRAMA SERIES PRIZE

Previous winners of the Yale Drama Series Prize include John Austin Connolly’s The Boys From Siam (selected by Edward Albee in 2007), Neil Wechsler’s Grenadine (selected by Edward Albee in 2008), Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig’s Lidless (selected by David Hare in 2009), Virginia Grise’s blu (selected by David Hare in 2010), Shannon Murdoch’s New Light Shine (selected by John Guare in 2011), Clarence Coo’s Beautiful Province (selected by John Guare in 2012), Jen Silverman’s Still (selected by Marsha Norman in 2013), Janine Nabers’s Serial Black Face (selected by Marsha Norman in 2014), Barbara Seyda’s Celia, a Slave: 26 Characters Testify (selected by Nicholas Wright in 2015), Emily Schwend’s Utility (selected by Nicholas Wright in 2016), Jacqueline Goldfinger’s Bottle Fly (selected by Nicholas Wright in 2017), Leah Nanako Winkler’s God Said This (selected by Ayad Akhtar in 2018), Liliana Padilla’s How to Defend Yourself (selected by Ayad Akhtar in 2019), and Rachel Lynett’s Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson) (selected by Paula Vogel in 2021), and Seyoung Kim’s Jar of Fat (selected by a consortium of previous winners of the Prize).

ABOUT THE DAVID CHARLES HORN FOUNDATION

The David Charles Horn Foundation was established in 2003 by Francine Horn, David’s wife and partner in the international fashion publication service Here & There. David was a man of vision and discipline with an overriding dedication to the written word. His dream of having his own writing published was never realized. The Foundation seeks to honor David’s aspirations by offering other writers the opportunity of publication. More particularly, the Foundation supports emerging playwrights, perhaps in greater need of assistance today than beginning writers in any other of the literary arts. The Foundation provides all funding for the Yale Drama Series.

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