



JAN 28-FEB 7, 2021

12th annual festival is **FREE + VIRTUAL** & curated by a **COMMUNITY PANEL**



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12th Annual Fertile Ground Festival of New Works Launches First-Ever Curated & Virtual Program for 2021 40 Projects Streamed January 28 – February 7

**31 Projects Selected by Community Panel Centered in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Plus Lunchtime Reading Series presented by LineStorm Playwrights, PDX Playwrights
& Lakewood Theatre Company**

PORTLAND, OREGON – November 30, 2020 | Fertile Ground Festival of New Works, a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance (PATA), is thrilled to offer 40 projects for the 12th annual festival. Virtual and free, Fertile Ground Festival 2021 marks the first time in the festival’s history that participant “acts of creation” are curated. The GROW PANEL, a diverse community panel of artists and arts administrators, selected 31 projects for this year’s festival, nine of which received a GROW AWARD. Festival productions will stream on Facebook and YouTube channels from Thursday, January 28 through Sunday, February 7, 2021.

“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.”

“This year’s festival will host an astounding array of artists whose voices, story subjects and project designs run the gamut,” said Nicole Lane, Fertile Ground Festival Director. “I believe we took a pivotal opportunity to meaningfully invite new artistic voices into the festival while also challenging all artists to innovate their work for this new normal world of streamed performance. At-home audiences certainly see a festival overflowing with diverse ‘acts of creation’ from a host of local artists who are emphatically representational of our community.”

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 project premiere was randomly assigned to ensure equity of placement. After a project premieres, most will be accessible for on-demand viewing until February 15, 2021.

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As all festival events are free, audiences are encouraged to make donations to Fertile Ground between now and the start of the festival in lieu of the typical \$50 Festival Pass. Audiences will also be asked to make donations to the artists and producers upon viewing the projects to support their work directly.



Fertile Ground Festival of New Work 2021
Presented by the Portland Area Theatre Alliance

Dates: January 28—February 7, 2021
Venue: Streamed on Fertile Ground Festival’s [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) channels
Tickets: FREE
Donations to project artists and producers encouraged. Donation link is included on each project listing and will be promoted at the project premiere.
Project List: [See here](#) or attached PDF for simple creator/producer/short description project info.

KEY LINKS:

[Festival Schedule](#) See the dates and times each project will premiere
[Project Listings](#) Descriptions, images and photos for each project
[FG21 Overview](#) Learn about how this year’s festival emerged
[GROW PANEL](#) Headshots and biographies for each panelist
[GROW AWARD](#) Learn about these new awards
[FG21 Photos](#) All producer press photos available for download. Name of show/producer/photo ID/photographer credit in the file name

→ INVITATION TO MEDIA

“Meet the Media Night”

Date: Thursday, January 7 | 5:30-9:30pm
Venue: Zoom
Description: Think “Speed Dating” to quickly “meet” project creators and get a snapshot about their project directly from them. This event is intended to be mutually beneficial. In years past, this in-person event served as press launch meets cocktail party. This year we will be attempting an approximation via Zoom.
The plan: media members will be in a Zoom room, producers/creators will be let into the room one-at-a-time, on a schedule in order of the festival schedule, at 5 minute intervals. Breaks are scheduled.

RSVP Contact: Nicole Lane, Festival Director to RSVP, and with any and all questions

2021 OVERVIEW

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 undertook 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 were revised. To serve the festival’s traditional play-reading function, LineStorm Playwrights, PDX Playwrights and Lakewood Theatre Company collaborated to curate and present a Lunchtime Reading Series as part of Fertile Ground 2021 programming.

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CURATION PROCESS

Submissions for Fertile Ground 2021 opened August 1 and closed September 4, 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. Panelists did not vote or deliberate on conflict of interest projects. Festival curation was monitored by non-voting panelists: Nicole Lane, Festival Director, and Dre Slaman, Managing Director. Vote-based evaluation criteria: 1/artistic merit of the outlined “act of creation” project concept; 2/proposal’s attention and planning for how the content will be recorded and presented for online production and viewing audience interest; 3/ overall project interest. Deliberation and discussion encompassed how the overall work addressed Fertile Ground’s aim to: 1/offer culturally competent works of art; 2/increase festival access to a broader range of artists; 3/prioritize the work of underrepresented artists in the community. [Learn more here.](#)

GROW PANEL

The GROW PANEL, a convened decision-making body for Fertile Ground 2021, adjudicated applications for the GROW AWARD and curated the festival. The GROW PANEL was composed of individuals whose identities encompass a spectrum of underrepresented voices, along with PATA representatives and non-voting Fertile Ground staff. 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 to create an equity-infused decision-making process for the 12th annual festival of new works. This shift offered an opportunity for Fertile Ground to evolve, ensure representation, and actively engage in pro-inclusivity and power-sharing practices.

GROW PANEL members included: Sara Jean Accaurdi, Roy Arauz (Facilitator), Michael Cavazos, Jane Comer, James Dixon, Tracy Cameron Francis, Robert Guitron, Heath Hyun Houghton, Anthony Hudson, Nicole Lane, Bianca McCarthy (Facilitator), Matthew Miller, Jeanette Mmunga, Val Yvette Peterson, Tess Raunig, Dre Slaman, Logan Starnes, Samson Syharath, and Mark Woodlief. [Learn more about the panelists here.](#)

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. Fertile Ground 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, age, gender identity, 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. Today, the festival welcomes artists of all backgrounds and disciplines in the region in order to elevate a wide swath of local voices and generate 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. Fertile Ground 2021 is funded in part by a 2020 Arts Equity & Access grant from the Regional Arts & Culture Council, the State of Oregon Coronavirus Relief Fund for Cultural Support, and with media sponsorship from Oregon ArtsWatch.

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