

Central Works 2023 Season Continues With:

World premiere #72: from the Central Works Writers Workshop

Oct 14 - Nov 12



written by Patricia Milton

directed by Gary Graves

featuring: Chelsea Bearce, Louel Señores, Michael Tuton & Jan Zvailfer

Make sure you're on our mailing list!

Central Works

presents

The Dignity Circle





Central Works mission is to develop and produce new plays for the theater. We are building a community where our commitment to new plays and civic engagement flourish together.

Central Works believes:

- New Plays are the lifeblood of a vital, relevant, and progressive theater.
- Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—in our storytelling, our company, and our audiences—are fundamental to our success.
- We are committed to social justice and the exploration of pressing political issues facing our world, inviting our community to reflect, converse, and connect in civic engagement.

A Note From the Playwright

I learned about gifting circles a few years ago and was immediately fascinated by the people who both perpetuate, and fall for, these cons. In *The Dignity Circle*, I'm interested in exploring the human desire to find an accepting community that offers the immediate rewards of recognition and praise (and, in this case, cash). I'm exploring how corruptible the allure of power can be, and how badly we can hurt one another, even if we start with the best of intentions.

Simply put, we're all lonely, and looking for comfort. In *The Dignity Circle*, I wanted the audience to recognize and empathize with my characters' loneliness, so as to perhaps provide greater understanding into how these gifting circles succeed in conning their victims again and again and again.

I am deeply grateful to our director, Gary Graves, everyone at Central Works, and this fantastic cast for bringing *The Dignity Circle* to life.

- Lauren Smerkanich

Central Works recognizes that our performance space is positioned on Huchuin territory, unceded land of the Lisjan Ohlone people. Our community has benefited from this land, and we owe the Ohlone people a collective debt.

Central Works donates annually to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.



**Enjoy 15% off Dinner
before the show**
*Excludes beverages, tax & gratuity

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Make a reservation on Open Table,
call (510) 848-7800 or email julias@berkeleycityclub.com



We have relaunched the lounge on the second floor of the Berkeley City Club as Morgan's Bar & Lounge! Take a seat at our new bar, originally built in the 1880s and graciously donated and restored by a few of our own members.

Try our wide variety of cocktails, wine, beer, and small bites.

Open Tuesday-Saturday, 4:30pm-9:00pm

Berkeley City Club | 2315 Durant Ave, Berkeley, CA 94704 | www.berkeleycityclub.com

The Berkeley City Club is a historic hotel, private social club, and event venue. It has been accepted into the National Register of Historic Places and is a member of the Historic Hotels of America. In 1927, a small group of women hired Julia Morgan to design and supervise the construction of a center around women's activities. Miss Morgan's "Little Castle" opened in November 1930 as the Berkeley Women's City Club, which became a center for social, cultural, recreational, and family activities in the East Bay.

For more information, please visit
berkeleycityclub.com.

What Some of Our Central Workers Are up To:

Steve Budd has a new solo show, *Seeing Stars*, at the SF Fringe Festival, Exit Theater, Aug 10, 19 & 26. Reservations & info: TheExit.org

Thomas Carnacki (aka **Gregory Scharpen**) has a new double-lp, *Cadavre Isolé*, slated to come out in September or October. thomascarnacki.bandcamp.com

Elizabeth Carter will direct *The Wolf Play* with lights designed by **Stephanie Anne Johnson** at Shotgun Players, Sep 2 - Oct 1. Reservations & info: ShotgunPlayers.org or 510.841.6500

Tamar Cohn will be appearing in *The Glass Menagerie* at Ross Valley Players, Sep 15 - Oct 15. Reservations & info: RossValleyPlayers.com or 415.456.9555

Cristina Garcia's new novel, *Vanishing Maps*, is coming out in July! Please join her for the book's launch on Tues 7/18 at Mrs. Dalloway's bookstore in Berkeley, 7 PM. Reservations (recommended) & info: CristinaGarciaNovelist.com

Stephanie Anne Johnson is designing lights for *The Birds*, directed by **Kimberly Ridgeway** at Altarena Playhouse, Aug 11 - Sep 10. Reservations & info: Altarena.org or 510.523.1553

Armando McClain appears in *Twelfth Night* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Jun 15 - Oct 15. Reservations & info: OSFAshland.org or 800.219.8161

Radhika Rao is performing in the SPARC (formerly Livermore Shakespeare Festival) production of *Silent Sky*, by **Lauren Gunderson** Jun 23- Jul 9. Reservations & info: SPARCTheater.org or 925.443.2273

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PATRICIA H. LYON
ATTORNEY AT LAW

1990 N. California Blvd., Suite 300 Phone: (415) 597-7800
Walnut Creek, CA 94596 Facsimile: (415) 243-8200
Email: phlyon@frenchandlyon.com

The Dignity Circle

written by **Lauren Smerkanich**

directed by **Gary Graves**

World Premiere #71

The Ensemble

(in order of speaking)

Sierra Marcks*Angela
Rebecca Pingree Judith
Heather Kellogg Baumann Katie C.
Adam Roy Scott
Dov Hassan* Parker
Kimberly Ridgeway Heather

Natalia Rivera-Ramos stage manager
Tammy Berlin costume designer
Gary Graves light designer
Alandra Hileman, Louel Señores technicians
Dave Maier intimacy/fight director
Thomas O'Brien properties designer
Gregory Scharpen operator/sound designer
Alandra Hileman, Robin Valerie Low, Bridget Soto front of house
Bridget Soto rehearsal assistant
Jan Zvaifler producing director

Kevin Clarke poster/mailer/brochure designer
David Hyry & Associates public relations
Robbie Sweeny photography
Kendra Lee Oberhauser program designer

The Rheinheimer Family production sponsor
David Harder & Patricia Milton production sponsor

The action takes place in a conference room in a very nice hotel in Sacramento, California. Several very nice living rooms in the suburbs of Sacramento, California. And the Baking Aisle of a Green Leaf supermarket.

The play runs 90 minutes with no intermission.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers. This Theater operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

This production is made possible with the generous support of the **Actors Equity** and **RHE Foundations, Alameda County ArtsFund** and the **Berkeley Civic Arts Grants Program**.

Bios

HEATHER KELLOGG BAUMANN (Kate) is making her debut with Central Works. She was most recently seen in *Clue* and *A Christmas Carol* with Center REP. Other recent productions: Rachel in *The How and the Why* (Lucky Penny Productions), Varya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Margaret/Anne in *Sense and Sensibility*, and Hallie in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (all at Town Hall Theatre), Evelina Bunner in *The Bunner Sisters* (reACT), and Kristin in *Kristin Hersh's RAT GIRL* (DIVafest). She graduated from UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television, and SF Circus Center's Clown Conservatory. See her next as Olympe in *The Revolutionist* at Lucky Penny Productions. www.heatherkelloggbaumann.com

TAMMY BERLIN (costume designer) began her theatre career in Chicago where she was the Artistic Director of Transient Theatre and Heroes Inc. Ensemble and The Managing Director of The Playwriters' Center. After moving to the Bay Area she switched her focus to costume design. Most recently she has designed shows for Bay Area Children's Theatre, Playground, Diablo Theatre Co., St. Mary's College, Marin Shakespeare and Berkeley Playhouse, as well as films for Flying Moose Productions, Videosyncrasy and EyeQ Films. She is a recent recipient of a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Costume Design.

GARY GRAVES (director) has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works since 1998. He has been a part of developing 71 world premiere productions with the company, many of which he has either written and/or directed. Some of the other productions he has directed for the company include *Dreaming in Cuban*, *King of Cuba*, *Bamboozled*, *Chekhov's WARD 6*, *Into the Beautiful North*, and *Machiavelli's The Prince*. He directed the company's first collaboratively developed script, *Roux*, at the Berkeley City Club in 1997. He also leads the Central Works Playwriting Program, and he teaches playwriting year-round at the Berkeley Rep School of Theater.

DOV HASSAN* (Parker) grew up in the Bay Area where he has been working as an actor, musician, director and teacher for many years. Dov is very excited to be working with Central Works for the first time. He is a co-founder and member of Theatre Cultura and a company member with Oakland Theater Project. Recent acting work includes *Lear* (CalShakes), *Vinegar Tom* (Shotgun Players), *Hamlet* (Oakland Theater Project), and *CHEER: Story of a Dreamer* (Theatre Cultura). Dov received his MFA in Acting and Directing from University of Missouri – Kansas City and currently is head of the theater program at Chabot College.

SIERRA MARCKS* (Angela) is thrilled to be making her debut with Central Works. She is an LA-based actress and voiceover artist and serves on the Board of Directors for Theatre of Note. Selected productions include *Nimrod*, *Welcome to the White Room*, *Phrazzled*, and more at Theatre of Note. Other favorite west coast productions include *Born To Win* at Celebration Theatre, and *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* at Long Beach Playhouse. She is a graduate of Marymount Manhattan College.

THOMAS O'BRIEN, he/him (property designer) is very pleased to be working with Central Works on The Dignity Circle. Thomas has designed props for theatre and photography for many years. Based in San Francisco, he has had opportunities to work with very talented theater groups. Credits include Universal Robots for Quantum Dragon Theatre, Passion for Custom Made Theatre, The Full Monty at Bay Area Musicals, and Aunt Jack, Prep Play, and Dot at NCTC. He has been nominated for a BACC Scenic Design Award for *The Mousetrap* (Ross Valley Players) and for *Picnic* at Ross Valley Players which won a BACC award for the Entire Production.

Terry Rillera
Barbara Robben
Mary Ann Rodgers
Marti Roush
Anne & Boyard Rowe
Deborah Dashow Ruth
Pat Saunders
Linda & Will Schieber
Jean Schiffman
Rebecca Schlichtig
Susan Marinoff & Thomas Schrag
Katherine Gale & John Shepherd
Al Hoffman & David Shepherd
Christine Sheppard
Cheryl Thompson & John Sherry
Tami & Alan Shindel
Suzanne Siebert
Jesus Sierra
Candida Silva
Hiram Simon
Harriet Simpson

Ann Singer
Elly Skarakis
Harold Smith
Sherry Smith
Kyila & John Sninsky
Jerome Solberg
Flora Sommers
Bob Spatz
Sheryl & William Springer
Richard Sterling
Laura Boxer & Hedy Straus
Joan Sullivan
Jane & Clif Taylor
Colin Thomson
Sheldon & Helen Tinsley-Jones
Canan Tolan
Michael Tuton
Gerald Umezawa
Linda Vallee
Liz Varnhagen
Lauren Volpini

Gretchen vonDuering
Jerry & Renée Wachtel
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Interested in sponsoring a production?

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Your tax-deductible donations may be made online at centralworks.org, or made by cash or check (payable to Central Works) and left in the donation box in the lobby or mailed to:

PO Box 9771, Berkeley, CA 94709

Central Works is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation



U.S. Small Business Administration

Wattis

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REBECCA PINGREE (Judith) recently played Adira in Michael Moran's *Exodus to Eden* at OTP, Bridget Potter in the original cast of The Kilbanes' *The Code* with ACT YC, The Baker's Wife in Sondheim's *Into the Woods* at Berkeley Playhouse, and an assortment of puppets (and herself) in Shadow Circus' *Voidville*. She's also performed throughout the Bay Area, including with TheatreFirst, Shotgun Players, Marin Theatre Company, Ray of Light, PlayGround, Napa Valley Conservatory, Livermore Shakespeare, and Perspective Theatre. She holds an MFA in Collaborative Theatremaking from Rose Bruford in London, and is a regular deviser/performer for Analog Theatre's Mask Monday series at Standard Deviant Brewing in SF (analogtheatre.org).

KIMBERLY RIDGEWAY (Heather) is making her return to Central Works after playing Duchess in *Wonderland* in 2019 and Biz in *The Human Ounce* in 2020. Kimberly is an accomplished Actor, Director and Playwright. Next up she is directing Conner McPherson's *The Birds* at Altarena Playhouse (August 2023) and *Misery* at Palo Alto Players (January 2024).

ADAM ROY (Scott) returns to Central Works for his third production in company having also appeared in *Years in the Hundreds* by Jesse Potterveld and *Chekov's Ward 6* adapted by Gary Graves. Other Bay Area credits include OASIS, Marin Theatre Co, Golden Thread, PlayGround and AlterTheater. Adam has trained with Second City Hollywood and San Francisco Circus Center's Clown Conservatory.

GREGORY SCHARPEN (sound design) has designed for Central Works for over 25 years, and his work has appeared in productions by Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Shotgun Players, Theatre Rhino, TheatreFIRST, and many others. Among other hats he's been known to wear are film editor (the Emmy-winning series *Have You Heard From Johannesburg; The Whistleblower Of My-Lai* featuring the Kronos Quartet; and most recently *Town Destroyer*) and radio broadcaster (numerous programs on KALX 90.7fm). Under the obscure moniker Thomas Carnacki, he concocts, records and performs "experimental" (read: unlistenable) music; the next Carnacki record will be the double-lp *Cadavre Isolé*, slated to be out in the fall. He is the recipient of a few Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, a Golden Eagle CINE Award, and – most significantly – one of the very infrequently-bestowed Jolly Trephination Awards for Total Textual Immersion.

LAUREN SMERKANICH (playwright), a graduate of The Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, is a writer-director currently based in Los Angeles. Recent honors include placing as a Semi-Finalist (*Gigi Inherits Four Mink Coats*) and Second-Rounder (*Boil*) in the 2021 Austin Film Festival Playwriting Competition. Recent favorite credits include writing and directing *A Glass of Wine* for Animal House's Backyard Plays series, and assistant directing on *Poor Clare* at The Echo Theater Company (winner "Best Production," 20-21 LA Drama Critics Circle Awards). Additionally, Lauren has recently participated in a writing residency at The Writer's Colony in Eureka Springs, AR, and is a Guest Teaching Artist with The Atlantic Theater Company's Access Success Program.





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**Central Works
 2023 Season is
 dedicated to the
 memory of
 Linda Schieber.**
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Linda and her husband Will became supporters and subscribers to Central Works in 2004. Linda joined the Central Works board of directors in 2009, and subsequently served as board president until last year. Her even temperament, sense of humor, willingness to work, and overwhelming generosity guided us and contributed enormously to the company's health and stability, particularly over the past few difficult years.

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