



Artists Repertory Theatre

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ARTISTS REP ANNOUNCES THE 2023/24 SEASON

ART Revolution: where bold ideas meet breathtaking performances

PUEBLO REVOLT by Dillon Christopher Chitto

THE HOT WING KING by Katori Hall

A BOARDING SCHOOL PLAY by Blossom Johnson

SAPIENCE by Diana Burbano



Artwork by Aki Ruiz

PORTLAND, OREGON – May 30, 2023 Artists Repertory Theatre (ART) Artistic Director Jeanette Harrison and Executive Director J.S. May announced the long-running company's 41st season. As the first season under the leadership of Harrison, the first known Native woman to hold the title of Artistic Director in the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), our 2023/24 season is an exhilarating venture, bringing voices that have never been heard on Portland stages before to our audiences. The aim this season will be to strengthen ART's partnerships and highlight powerful voices that are sure to illuminate change and create lasting impact on the community.

The season will kick off with an extraordinary new play (and Portland Premiere) by Indigenous playwright, Dillon Christopher Chitto. *Pueblo Revolt* is a comedy about two brothers on the eve of the only time in North American history when the Native people kicked out the colonizers. *Pueblo Revolt* will be performed at the University of Portland and then at the Center for Native Arts and Cultures. The partnerships will strengthen mentorship and continued education for students, provide professional opportunities for Native artists, and support Native Arts and Cultures Foundation's plans to activate its new building, the former Yale Union, as a community

gathering and arts space. Next up is the winner of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and a West Coast Premiere, *The Hot Wing King* by Katori Hall. This is a fierce new comedy about the risks and rewards of celebrating who you are, following Cordell, his boyfriend, and their friends in Memphis, Tennessee preparing their culinary entry for the annual "Hot Wang Festival." Our third show of the season is *A Boarding School Play* by Blossom Johnson, a tale of four high school girls in a modern-day boarding school. Their Song n' Dance group actively fights against the long-lasting effects of colonialism through traditional songs when the girls are invited to sing at the 2002 Winter Olympics. The play reveals all the complexities and joys and humor of being a Navajo teen girl on the cusp of adulthood. ART ends the season with an ART commissioned play, *Sapience* by Diana Burbano. This production will be presented in partnership with PHAME as the opening play in ART's reinvented home building upon our return in 2024. *Sapience* is a ground-breaking and imaginative World Premiere about how we seek to be understood when no other understands you.

ART is thrilled to stage four exceptional playwrights who are set to captivate audiences with their bold, unique voices and thought-provoking narratives this season. This influx of fresh talent promises to invigorate the theatrical landscape, ushering in a new era of creativity and exploration of universal stories. Dillon Christopher Chitto's work is a masterful blend of wit, introspection, and poignancy. **Artistic Director Jeanette Harrison** shares, "I'm thrilled to introduce Portland audiences to the innocent comedy of Chitto. I fell in love with this play the second that the main character started talking to a stool, imagining it was the guy he had a crush on." ART is also thrilled to bring Katori Hall's story to Portland. "Two-time Tony Award nominee Katori Hall has taken her place among the pantheon of today's top living playwrights. It's thrilling to produce the West Coast premiere of the play she wrote as a love letter to her brother," explains Harrison. Known for her ability to weave intricate character dynamics and explore complex social issues, "Hall promises to challenge conventional theatre through humor, while also inviting audiences to deeply reflect on the relationships around you." The third playwright, Blossom Johnson, also dives into the depths of relationships, amplifying voices while shedding light on pressing social issues that challenge the status quo. "Blossom is one of the only Native playwrights I know who is truly writing for the world she wants all Native women to get to live in, a world where Native girls exist with joy, with typical teenager pettiness, with hope, with the struggle to step into their roles as leaders in their community," Harrison shares. ART closes the season with returning playwright, Diana Burbano (*The Vertical City* Audio drama). Harrison shares, "I'm so thrilled to open our new building with a commission by Diana Burbano. Diana's characters are complex, multi-dimensional, messy and so human. She's the perfect writer to tackle the longing for connection, especially for all of us who were socially isolated during the past few years and are now struggling to relearn how to communicate. When you add in neurodivergence, that struggle to understand, to find someone who speaks your language: I'm thrilled for ART to take a giant step forward in representation for people with disabilities." This play will get us back into our building, where accessibility is a priority during the renovations. Burbano's play resonates with authenticity and provides a powerful platform for exploring shared experiences.

The season of ART Revolution exemplifies the spirit of bold artistic choices and provocative stories. Of the upcoming season, **Harrison** says, “My goal with this season is to celebrate joy, to invite connection, to build community. We’ve all been through something, and it’s time to come together for healing, laughter, and food. I love that one of our plays will literally be set in a kitchen, which to me is the heart of any home. This is the season of Artists Rep’s return toward home. And we are specifying that our home is open to all, by centering stories of Native joy, Black love, and culminating in a story that is about all of us hunting for ways to be understood.” As the curtain rises on the next chapter for ART, we celebrate new voices, new partnerships, and a new home.

The importance of audience engagement extends beyond the onstage productions. It also helps propel ART into our newly renovated building at 1515 Morrison. **Executive Director, J.S. May** continues to lead RISE: The Campaign for Artists Repertory Theatre. To date, \$24.52 million has been raised on the \$30 million goal. “The next phase of construction that will return ART to the building began in March 2023 and we hope to close our 41st season in the spring of 2024 with our first play in the building. We just need the help from our community of supporters to get us over the top to this goal,” states May.

While ART continues to invest in the production of provocative new works and programs that sustainably amplify the work of diverse playwrights, it’s also creating accessible theatre for our patrons. Continuing with an accessible pay structure for the 2023/24 season, all single tickets are available on a sliding scale six weeks before a show opens; patrons get to choose the price point that works best for their budget. Community support is not only a direct investment to local artists and groundbreaking work, but also funds ART’s commitment to pricing accessibility.

Single tickets will go on sale six weeks before each show, starting at \$10 for previews and \$30 for the regular run. Artists Rep also participates in Arts for All, a program that entitles members \$5 tickets at participating arts organizations. For a full list of pricing accessibility please visit our website.

THE FULL 2023/24 SEASON

ART Revolution: where bold ideas meet breathtaking performances

Pueblo Revolt

By Dillon Christopher Chitto

Date: Sept 18 - Oct 15, 2023

Feem and Ba’homa are two Pueblo brothers thrust into the center of a revolution against their Spanish occupiers. It’s an exciting place to be! Or it would be if Feem didn't have a huge crush on the Spanish baker’s son. (Awkward!) Set in an IndigiFuturist 1680, *Pueblo Revolt* explores the only time a Native population successfully expelled their colonizers with a fresh, sweetly comic story about two young brothers trying to meet their extraordinary moment.

Portland Premiere

The Hot Wing King

By Katori Hall

Date: TBD

August in Memphis, TN and things are getting hot. It's time for the annual "Hot Wang Festival" and Cordell Crutchfield knows he has the wings that'll make him king. Supported by his boyfriend Dwayne and their culinary clique, The New Wing Order, Cordell is marinating and firing up his frying pan in a bid to reclaim the crispy crown. But when a family emergency forces Dwayne's troubled nephew into the mix, it quickly becomes a recipe for disaster. The first place trophy isn't the only thing Cordell risks losing. Will it all go up in flames?

Winner 2021 Pulitzer Prize For Drama and West Coast Premiere

A Boarding School Play

By Blossom Johnson

Date: TBD

Four high school girls are thrilled when their song'n'dance group is selected to sing the Navajo National Anthem at the Winter Olympics in 2002. Bursting with excitement, hope, and confidence, the girls' plans are upset when a teacher thinks one of them left a threatening voicemail. Jumping into action, they launch a plan to get rid of that teacher. Exuberant, sunny, and delightful, this boarding school comedy celebrates the enthusiastic passions of young Native women.

Rolling World Premiere

Sapience

by [Diana Burbano](#)

Date: TBD

Elsa is a primatologist studying the language abilities of orangutans like Wookie, who she's training to speak. More comfortable with her subjects than she is with most humans, Elsa's world gets uncomfortably messy when her cousin's child AJ, who is nonverbal and on the autism spectrum, starts an unlikely friendship with Wookie. Warm at heart, Sapience is an imaginative, theatrical exploration of different kinds of intelligence and the universal desire to be understood.

World Premiere and ART commission

ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

[ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE'S \(Artists Rep or ART\)](#) mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for a diverse community of artists and audiences to take creative risks. Artists Rep (est. 1982) is Portland's oldest professional theatre company and has become a significant presence in the U.S. regional theatre with a legacy of world, national, and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. In 2016, ART became the 72nd member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN). Plays developed by ART have subsequently been produced in New York, Chicago, London, and throughout the country. Recognition for ART developed plays includes the Dramatists Guild Foundation Award, the Edgerton New Play Award, NEA Funding, the Mellon Foundation National Playwright

Residency Program, American Theatre Magazine's Most-Produced Plays, and coverage in the New Yorker and the New York Times. In 2021, the Oregon Media Production Association (OMPA) honored Artists Rep with the Creative Innovation Award for the company's pivot to digital mediums in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. ART recognizes that we are a predominately white organization and operate within systemic racism and oppression, and that silence and neutrality are actions of complicity. We commit ourselves to the work of becoming an anti-racism and anti-oppression organization, and will [work with urgency](#) to end racial inequities in our industry and our culture. To learn more about our organization and programs, please visit <https://artistsrep.org/about/>

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