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GUILD HALL'S JOHN DREW THEATER TO PRESENT WORKSHOP OF EXQUISITE CORPSE'S NEW SOCIALLY DISTANT INTERACTIVE PLAY, *ZOETROPE*

"A living room drama unlike any you've seen before..."

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, APRIL 23 AND 24



April 6, 2021—East Hampton, NY — Picture this... Two people, a fish, a New York City apartment on top of a trailer bed, and you. **Exquisite Corpse Company** (ECC) returns to Guild Hall with an interactive, immersive, and portable living diorama of 2020. Written by ECC writers-in-residence Leah Barker, Emily Krause, and Elinor T Vanderburg, produced by Liz Frost, and co-directed by Porcia Lewis and **Guild Hall Artist in Residence (2019)** alumni and ECC's Artistic Director Tess Howsam, ***Zoetrope*** will be taking to the streets of Brooklyn and beyond in the summer of 2021, but first ECC will build, rehearse, and perform the new production at Guild Hall's John Drew Backyard Theater with socially distanced seating for a limited and lucky audience on **Friday, April 23 and Saturday, April 24**.

ECC's mission for this project is to use our shared experiences as a nation and as individuals, to create an interactive performance that offers reflective healing and generative dialogue as we continue to process 2020 in 2021. Linking moments of connection and loneliness, with a surrealist

twist, this mobile piece presents an accessible (Covid-19 conscious) platform for people across the New York City boroughs and state lines.

Over the course of 35 minutes, the audience experiences an intimate, interactive live performance, and will play a significant role in dictating the way the story plays out. The project aims to explore interactivity and intimacy in a time of isolation. Functioning like a traveling peep-show, audience members peer inside a living room that is equal parts familiar and absurd as they experience a living room drama unlike any they've seen before.

In talking about the creative process of the writing of the script, Producer Liz Frost shared, "As a byproduct of trying to figure a way to produce safe live theater that is also interactive for the audience, Tess designed an outline for the way that the scripts could be built with the audience choosing which scenes are played out. This is important both to the audience interaction of the show as well as to ECC's mission of exquisite corpse and collective assembly. In taking the structure of the script that Tess created and also recognizing that 2020 was a traumatic year in many ways, and Tess wanted to give people a small amount of agency."

In a time of uncertainty, Tess began to dream up different ways to find a solution to the questions, "How could ECC generate its own space?" And "How can ECC create a live interactive immersive experience that keeps audience members and artists safe during a pandemic?" Howsam shared, "In the spring of 2020, we produced two online festivals, *Site-Specific 2020* and *Site-Specific Rebirth*. These events were interactive, with a drinking game attached to the show themes, but we also relied on technology to connect with our community. *Zoetrope* is the solution to putting our audience and actors back in the same space while keeping both safe."

Zoetrope is supported by and developed at Guild Hall's John Drew Theater and will take place on **Friday, April 23 at 5pm, 5:45pm, 6:30pm, 8pm, 8:45pm, and 9:30pm** and **Saturday, April 24 at 3:30pm, 4:15pm, 5pm, 5:45pm, 6:30pm, 8pm, 8:45pm, and 9:30pm**. Additional support for Exquisite Corpse Company is provided by fiscal sponsor, Fractured Atlas.

Tickets are \$50 per 2-person box and \$30 per 1-person box and space is limited to no more than six audience members per performance, lasting approximately 35 minutes.

Theater Programming supported in part by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Barbara Slifka, The Schaffner Family Foundation, Brown Harris Stevens, Michael Balmuth, Lang Insurance, and funding from The Ellen and James S. Marcus Endowment for Musical Programming and The Melville Straus Family Endowment.

John Drew Backyard Theater

Special thanks to Marty and Michele Cohen, Ben Krupinski Builder, Hollander Design, and Groundworks Landscaping.

ABOUT EXQUISITE CORPSE COMPANY

The mission of the Exquisite Corpse Company (ECC) is to develop and produce new work by emerging theater artists, visual artists, and musicians, in a supportive and inclusive environment utilizing the technique of ekphrastic creation and the surrealist concept of “collective assembly.” Founded in 2012 by Artistic Director Tess Howsam, and other like-minded artists, the vision of ECC is to build a supportive community across artistic mediums, investigating the line between artistic boundaries, audience integration, and create interdisciplinary work outside the frame of a traditional stage or art gallery. A company comprised of queer, women-identifying, or non-binary artists, central themes to our work reflect contemporary issues of gender, sociological, political, and ecological themes.

For more information about this and other programs, visit exquisitecorpsecompany.com.

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall, one of the first multidisciplinary centers in the country to combine a museum, theater, and education space under one roof, was established in 1931 as a gathering place for community where an appreciation for the arts would serve to encourage greater civic participation. For nine decades, Guild Hall has embraced this open-minded vision and provided a welcoming environment for the public to engage with art exhibitions, performances, and educational offerings. Art and artists have long been the engine of Guild Hall’s activities and the institution continues to find innovative ways to support creativity in everyone.

For more information about this and other programs, visit guildhall.org.

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